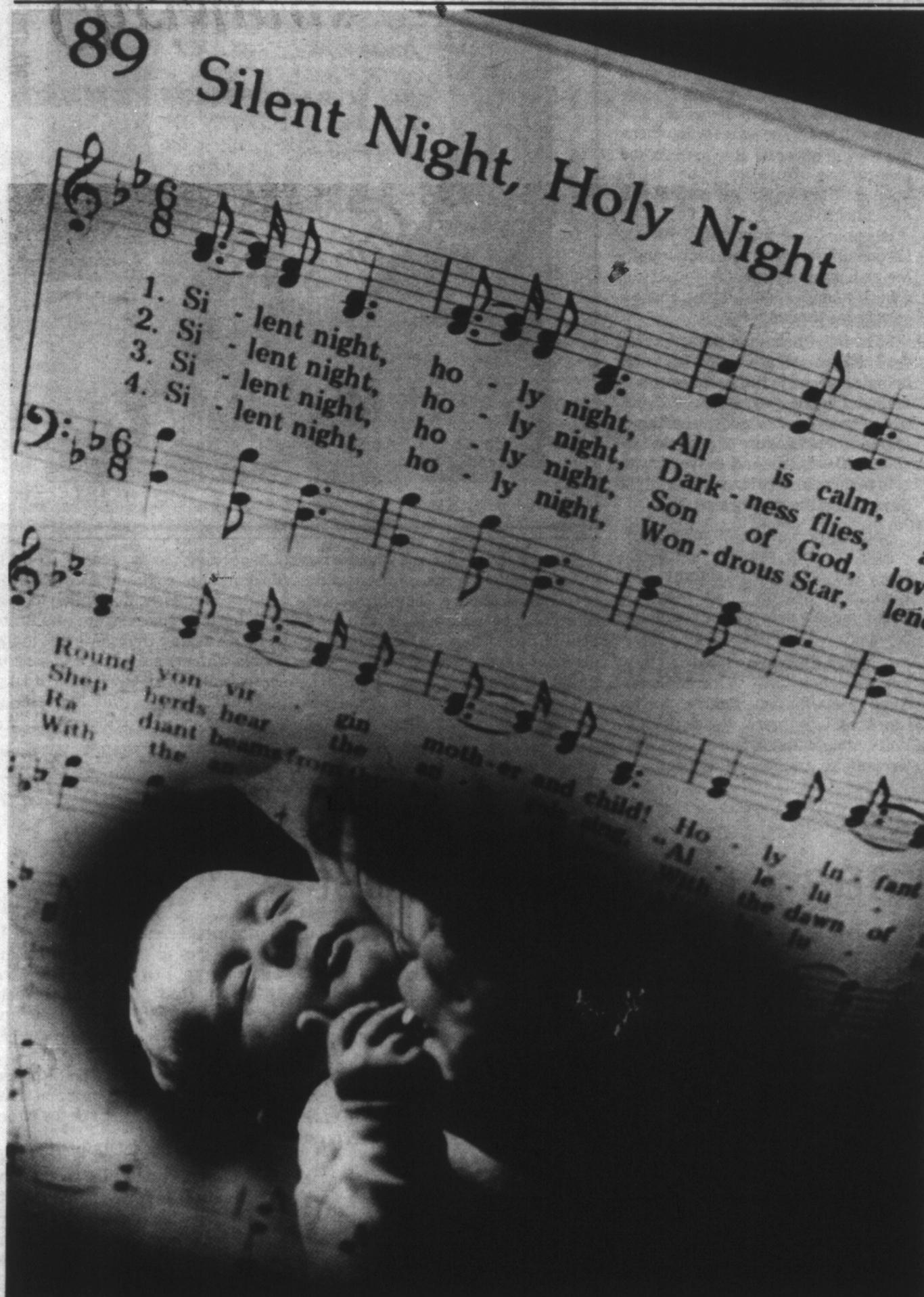


# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, December 24, 1987

Published Since 1877



NASHVILLE — BSSB photo by Jim Veneman.

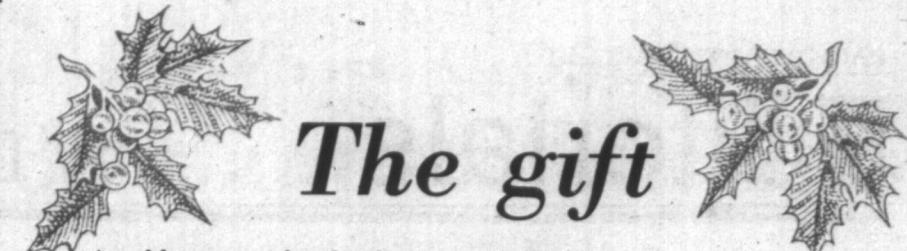
## Christmas gift suggestions not advertised on TV

- Give your parents the words, "I love you."
- Give your children a full day of your time.
- Give an ear to someone who needs a listener.
- Give a hand to someone less strong.

- Give an old friend an unexpected visit or letter.
- Give a former neighbor a telephone call.
- Give a kind word to a weary sales clerk.
- Give a prayer for peace in the world.

- Give more gifts you have made; fewer money has bought.
- Give the money you save anonymously to someone in need.
- Give yourself time to reflect on this holy season.
- Give God thanks for sending His Son as the Redeemer of His world.

"The Herald"  
Crystal Springs



An old man sat by the dim street light  
As the day slowly faded into the night.  
His clothes were tattered with his coat threadbare  
But of this he really did not seem to care.  
The snow circled quietly around his head  
And laid down gently a soft white bed.  
As shoppers rushed past with a push and a shove  
"Merry Christmas," he called, "May God show you his love."

With the old man's message sounding in his ear  
A young man stopped to question his cheer.  
"Old man, how can you sit here in clothes all tattered  
And wish us God's love as though it mattered?"  
You have no gifts this Christmas season  
And nothing to give, so what's the reason  
For wishing us a Merry Christmas and that God show us his love  
When it seems you've been forgotten, if indeed he is above?"

The old man looked up with a smile on his face  
And made him an offer to take a place  
Beside him on the snowy street  
"I have someone I want you to meet."  
He pulled out a Bible, the sheets yellow from age,  
And slowly began to turn each page.  
He told him the story of the babe who was sent  
To give eternal life to those who repent.  
Of a man who was nailed to a cross for our sins,  
"And this, young man, is where Christmas begins,  
In hearts once empty, where Jesus now lives.  
My gift is his message, most precious to give.  
I give it to you with the hope you might share  
So more and more people will learn of God's care."

The young man grew silent and bowed his head.  
He thanked the Lord for the words that were read.  
"I understand now you've reason for cheer."  
He wiped his eye to hide the tear.  
"You're right, old man, you've much to give  
When you offer assurance that Jesus does live."

The young man left with a step that was lighter.  
For him this Christmas would be much brighter.  
And as the shoppers passed him with a push and a shove,  
"Merry Christmas!" he called, "May God show you his love!"

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee  
*Once a year*

How seldom Christmas comes — only once a year; and how soon it is over — a night and a day! If that is the whole of it, it seems not much more durable than the little toys that one buys of a fakir on the street corner. They run for an hour, and then the spring breaks, and the legs come off, and nothing remains but a contribution to the dust heap.

But surely that need not and ought not be the whole of Christmas — only a single day of generosity, ransomed from the dull servitude of a selfish year — only a single night of merry-making, celebrated in the slave-quarters of a selfish race! If every gift is the token of a personal thought, a friendly feeling, an unselfish interest in the joys of others, then the thought, the feeling, the interest, may remain long after the gift is forgotten.

— Henry Van Dyke

# Editorials . . . by Don McGregor

## A peaceful Christmas

Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Christ, the event that was supposed to bring peace into our lives, has wound up being a hassle.

It's not the fault of the event. It's the fault of those of us who are trying to squeeze it and shape it and bend it to our wills.

It's a wonderful occasion for an observation at the church, but sometimes the observation becomes the master. We should be observing a time of dedication to the Master.

It's a wonderful time for giving gifts to loved ones and friends, and this we should do. For the most part, however, our search for gifts, our paying for the gifts, and our worrying about their adequacy and correctness overshadow any consideration we have for the reason for Christmas.

The traffic is awful, and we become perturbed about that.

We should be having Christmas observations at our churches. We should be giving each other gifts. We should not lessen our intensity of doing these things to the best of our ability.

What we should do also, however, is move our intensity of thought for the Christmas purpose up above the other aspects in which we are involved.

Luke tells us that an angel appeared to shepherds in a field outside of Bethlehem and told them that he had

wonderful news for everybody in the world, and it was that the Savior had been born.

Then a multitude of heavenly beings joined the angel and praised God by saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Throughout all of the years of memory people have been saying, "Where is the peace?" "Why did we lose it?" "How did we lose it?" "What do we have to do to get it back?"

And there are no answers forthcoming. If the peace that comes from knowing Christ could be found on a corporate basis, we would have found it long ago.

We can't all get together and find it. We would have too many ideas on how to go about it. We wouldn't be able to agree. We would cut out the hassle of shopping for a few days, but some enterprising merchant would dream up a new scheme, and it would start all over again. That's all right. That's his business.

The peace is to be found within each one of us if it is to be found at all. We can't have it because someone else has it. We can't all get together and vote it in. It comes only and individually through our personal relationship with God.

The frustrations of church pro-

grams are not going to destroy that peace if it is rooted deeply inside of us. The hassles of Christmas shopping are not going to divert it.

We can share the peace with others, but we will never be able to make it a program or a function to be visited upon all the people of any body of people collectively.

It comes one at a time. We are responsible to the Lord individually for accepting his peace. We can tell others, and we should. They must accept it for themselves.

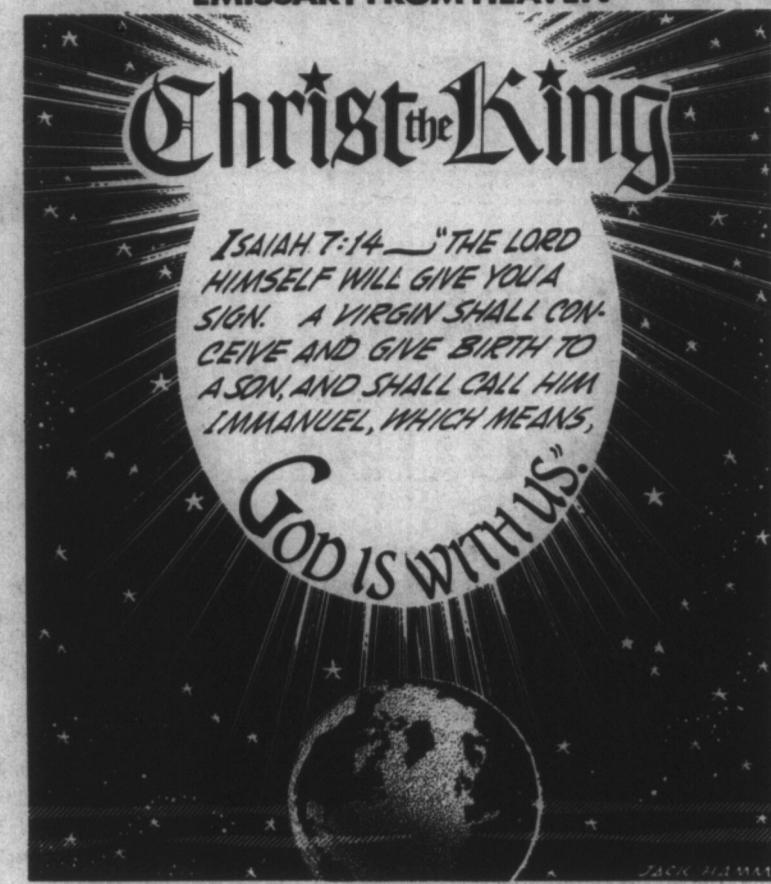
So at this Christmas time, may we realize that we are responsible for bringing peace to the world as it is to be found in our own hearts, and may our experiences bring joy to ourselves and to others because of our relationship to the Lord. And may that joy bring others to accept the peace of the Savior in their own hearts.

That is the Christmas message.

And may our readers find peace, joy, and good will during this Christmas season; and may the beginning of a new year be bright and prosperous for them.

A joyous Christmas from the Baptist Record folks — Tim Nicholas, Anne McWilliams, Evelyn Keyes, Florence Larrimore, Renee Walley, Betty Anne Bailey, Irene Martin, Sam Greenfield, and Don McGregor.

### EMISSARY FROM HEAVEN



Pray for the Christians who are being persecuted in the southern state of Oaxaca in Mexico. Some have spent time in jail because of their faith, with little or no food, and much verbal and physical abuse. Pray that they will know God's courage, comfort, strength and love. Pray for Christians in other countries around the world who suffer because of their faithfulness to Christ.

According to a recent report, Mozambique is the most miserable country in the world in which to live. Pray for missionaries Jim and Brenda Brock as they minister to the many people who are suffering and seek to share Jesus' love. Pray for the Brocks' physical safety and emotional well-being.

## Guest opinion . . .

## The Christmas I remember best

*Perhaps readers will indulge me the presentation of this guest opinion, for it rekindled memories of my own experience that same Christmas. I spent it in a prisoner of war camp near Muhlberg, Germany. I had been a prisoner for about three weeks; and a friend from my squad (I was a machine gunner), Ted Jenkins of Massachusetts, and I had managed to stay together. Germany was in bad shape by that time, but the Germans had managed to give us a little "ersatz" cream and sugar; so Ted and I made some snow ice cream. Ice cream in such weather might sound strange, but it was a bit of celebration. Ted was 19. I was 20.*

*This guest piece came as a result of a letter to the editor last year looking for Mississippi members of another Third Army unit. It surely brought back vivid memories. — Editor*

By W. E. Hess

A Christmas I can never forget was in 1944 in a barn in Wahl, Luxembourg. At that time I was commander of a collecting company in the 26th Inf-

antry Division of General Patton's Third Army. We could be considered an ambulance company, there being 100 men, 10 ambulances, and other vehicles. Our job was to collect the casualties from the front, bring them to our station where treatment was administered, (plasma for shock, bandaging of wounds, splinting of fractures, etc.), and then deliver them to division clearing station, usually 15 to 20 miles to the rear.

We were engaged in the so-called "Battle of the Bulge," trying to squeeze of General Runstedt's spearhead through the Ardennes. The fighting was fierce, the temperature well below zero, and the snow four or five feet deep. Boy, was it cold!

I had taken over a tin barn, one of the few remaining usable buildings, for my station; and it was so cold 10 feet away from the pot-bellied stove that we had to use chemical hot pads to line the tubing in order to keep the plasma from freezing before reaching the wounded soldier's vein.

Morale was at a very low level because of the recent breakthrough by the Germans. Getting home seem-

ed years away; and that song we had been singing, "I'll Be Home for Christmas," wasn't sung any more.

In an attempt to cheer my boys (and myself), I decided we must have a Christmas tree with all the decorations. I told the owner of the barn of my plan to cut down a pine tree; but much to my surprise he said it was against the law and that I couldn't cut one down unless I was prepared to plant another. That was out of the question with five feet of snow on the frozen ground. We were going to have a tree, I decided, if I had to fight a secondary war with the Luxembourg police.

There was a beautiful patch of woods just yards away from our station (the woods in Europe are beautiful and well groomed), so after dark I crawled out through the snow and cut down a dandy little tree that I had previously reconnoitered, dragged it silently through the snow into the barn, and set it up.

What do you decorate a Christmas tree within a barn in Luxembourg with no stores from which to buy trimmings, etc? You decorate it the G.I.

way — improvise. We gathered armloads of long ribbons of tin foil that had been dropped from allied planes to knock out German radar.

Now you know what happened to tin foil that disappeared from your gum wrappers during the war. Some of our bandages were red flannel. These were cut to just the right size, and with the tin foil for icicles and the red flannel shaped and draped carefully upon the tree, it was beautiful!

Living in the house that was nothing more than one end of the barn were five little children and their mother and father. The children were brought in to see the tree, and their hungry little faces lit up beyond description. They danced up and down pointing to the tree, shouting "Tannenbaum! Tannenbaum!" Only then did we realize that Christmas was just a dim memory to these war-ravaged people.

Christmas Day broke bright and clear and cold. As soon as they were awake, the children were brought into the barn where, lo and behold, under the tree, supplied by my men and myself, were five plates of goodies — cut up pieces of divinity sent to me

by my mother-in-law, Mrs. Frank B Muir; pieces of fruit cake from my wife, Marge, and my mother, Mrs. Milton M. Hess; pieces of Velveeta cheese sent by Aunt Ruby Layton; and bits of chocolate and hard candies saved from our K rations diet.

The mother received a bottle of perfume from a G.I. Paris visit and a bar of soap — real luxuries. For the father we had cigarettes.

The joy in the faces of the little children at the sight of the goodies and the beautiful tree was something to behold. Even the faces of the toughest G.I.'s seeing their own kids, brothers, and sisters through these little Luxembourgers, were softened.

The fun and celebration was soon over, and it was back to treating another ambulance load of casualties; but the presence of that little tree (a little bit of home), and the thoughts of children made happy, made this the most memorable Christmas ever for me and the men of the 26th.

W. E. Hess is a physician in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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## Baptists may assist in Mongolian school system

By Erich Bridges

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (BP) — Mongolia's minister of education has invited Southern Baptist educators to aid in efforts to expand English instruction throughout the Mongolian school system.

Cooperative Services International Director Lewis Myers and his associate, Jack Shelby, met in the Mongolian capital with Education Minister Byambyn Davaasuren. They discussed Mongolia's education goals for 1990-95, which include teaching English as a second language.

Myers and Shelby offered the resources of CSI, the Southern Baptist organization that sends a variety of skilled personnel and assistance to countries that request the service.

Davaasuren responded to the offer and tentatively agreed to a summer 1988 visit of American teaching specialists in the field of English as a second language. The specialists would join Mongolian teachers in

workshops and help develop the five-year education goals. The verbal agreement awaits final approval at higher levels of the Mongolian government.

The English-teaching program would reach "every level of education, from primary through university study in Mongolia," Myers said. Later emphases could include the improvement of English libraries and computer-based English instruction.

Mongolia, a nation of about two million people, is surrounded by China and the Soviet Union. It is allied with the Soviets but established diplomatic relations with the United States in early 1987. The Mongolians claim 100 percent literacy among the population.

Myers outlined the Mongolian initiative in a progress report on the first 30 months of Cooperative Services International work. Other highlights:

— More than 500 Southern Baptists have lived or spent time in China during the period, sharing their skills in teaching, technology, health care, and other fields as the Chinese strive for national modernization.

— Through CSI, Southern Baptists continue educational, agricultural, healthcare and emergency relief projects in the Indochinese nations of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

— CSI actively is probing the potential for involvement in numerous other countries now off-limits to traditional Christian missions.

While discussing Indochina, Myers mentioned a recent trend in Vietnam toward inviting Vietnamese Christians "to assume a variety of roles in government to fight creeping corruption."

Why Christians? "They are incorruptible," one government official commented.

Erich Bridges writes for the FMB.

## FMB goals aim to accelerate world evangelization pace

By Bob Stanley

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — A set of goals aimed at accelerating the pace of world evangelization was outlined Dec. 9 for members of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

These goals are to help Southern Baptists in their aim of sharing the gospel with all people by the year 2000, said Keith Parks, president of the FMB.

This task is too big for Southern Baptists alone, he acknowledged, but he said he is encouraged by a growing sense of partnership with overseas Baptists and a new awareness of the need to coordinate work with other evangelical groups.

For its part, the board has set several 1988 goals including:

— Work with 50 missions, the organizations of missionaries, and national conventions to find ways to reach groups of neglected people in these mission fields who have not yet heard the gospel.

In partnership with overseas Baptist conventions that also have foreign missions outreach, establish a witness among 25 unevangelized people groups. In some instances, Baptists from these overseas conventions may be able to live and work in countries that would not admit American missionaries.

— Identify and deploy 25 non-residential missionaries. These would be missionaries best suited to help evangelize nations or people groups where living among them is impossible.

— Share a model of international prayer strategy and seek to secure participation of 25 conventions and unions overseas.

— Plan and start strategies of evangelism for six limited-access countries.

Reports at the meeting stressed that a growing number of the world's 235 countries are not open to a traditional missionary approach. Of the total, 139 are open to the gospel, and Southern Baptists now have missionaries assigned to 112. The other 96 include 44 nations closed to missionaries or extremely difficult to enter and 52 with only limited access. Later, the board unanimously approved a policy that will allow missionaries voluntarily to become citizens of certain countries where foreign missionary access is difficult. The action came in response to a plea from missionaries in Indonesia, where visa restrictions may force nearly two-thirds of the 87 missionaries to leave by early 1989.

One of the 1988 goals calls for the

board to work with each mission to develop a 10-year plan through which at least 70 percent of the mission force will be involved directly in outreach and church planting.

Another goal will ask missions to identify all positions now occupied by missionaries that should be filled by nationals.

"The whole point is," Parks said, "we will not sit in Richmond and decide, country by country, what ought to be done. But the strategy planning that will take place here is to say to the mission: 'You must do this. We want to review what you do and lay that alongside total world needs.' And we may come back to say, 'You're going to have to accelerate this in order to free up resources to accomplish (goals) that are more urgent.'

The board next year will study the foreign mission efforts of three other groups — the Assemblies of God, Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Church of God, based in Cleveland, Tenn.

The board added its 112th country with assignment of personnel to Vanuatu, an island group in the South Pacific.

Bob Stanley writes for the FMB.

## Malaysia closes 33 Baptist churches

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (BP)

— Thirty-three Malaysian Baptist churches received orders Dec. 14 to suspend services within seven days, as Baptists in that country continue to feel repercussions from recent government enforcement of the Internal Security Act.

Sources in Malaysia say police are using zoning regulations to halt the services of 33 churches in the state of Negri Sembilan. Government officials say the sites on which the churches are meeting are not designated for religious activities. Therefore, they are said to be violating zoning codes.

However, Baptist leaders there claim some of those churches have been meeting in the same locations for more than 20 years.

In a related development, one of five Baptist leaders arrested in a nationwide sweep six weeks ago has been released from jail. Tan Bee Hwa, minister at Damasara Utama Baptist Church in Kuala Lumpur, was released at the end of November.

Four other Baptist leaders, including James Lai, remain jailed since their arrest Oct. 29. Lai, pastor of First Baptist Church of Petaling Jaya, reportedly is being held in solitary confinement. The government has allowed Lai's family to see him twice a week for about 30 minutes at a time.

Baptist leaders in Malaysia say they are not certain about the status of the other three prisoners. No formal charges have been filed against any of the Baptists arrested. The government claims the five Baptists, along with 106 other people, were arrested in an attempt to defuse racial and religious tensions between ethnic Chinese and ethnic Malays. All the arrested Baptists are ethnic Chinese.

Shortly after release, Tan spoke to a monthly Baptist co-workers meeting about her time in prison. Although her comments were guarded, she said she was treated well, fed regularly and was allowed to have her Bible and read it. But she was not allowed contact with anyone except the officials who questioned her.

Never formally charged, she was told on her release that she could go about her normal life but if she did anything wrong she would be arrested again.

Tan reportedly was trying to begin a church in her home. For six months she has owned a home in a governmental housing project reserved for Islamic people. Two Baptist pastors also own homes in that same housing development.

The three Baptists are the only ethnic Chinese, non-Islamic people in the area.

Tan reportedly was warned about trying to resume religious activities in the housing development. Specifically she was told not to attempt to start a church in her house. Religious activities outside of the Islamic faith and practice are forbidden in the area.

Southern Baptist missionary David Watson said Tan was scheduled for home missionary appointment but the Malaysian Baptist Convention Home Mission Board is facing a financial crisis. "We're not able to appoint anyone else right now," said Watson, who is a member of the mission board.

Giving from the churches is down 22 percent in the midst of an economic slump in Malaysia, he said. The financial crisis is "affecting our mission."

The Baptist work is pretty much at a standstill right now."

In spite of recent economic and religious tensions in Malaysia, missionaries point out that churches still are reporting baptisms. The seminary graduated its largest class in early December and all but one of the 27 new graduates found work in local Baptist churches. The remaining graduate chose a foreign missions option.

Even with the influx of recent graduates, Watson said, 30 percent of the Baptist churches in Malaysia still are without pastors.

## Missionaries and children are martyred in Zimbabwe

HARARE, Zimbabwe (EP) — Sixteen white missionaries and children were hacked to death by Marxist-Leninist rebels in Zimbabwe, a southern African nation. They were killed Nov. 25 by antigovernment rebels who left a note saying they were seeking to rid the country of "Western, capitalist-oriented people."

The killings took place during a raid on two farms that were part of the Community for Reconciliation, an interracial commune in western Zimbabwe, affiliated with the Kansas City-based Grace Ministries, a pentecostal organization which is a branch of South Kansas City

Fellowship. Several members of the commune were Zimbabwe citizens who had left careers and homes in the city. John Russell, who was away at the time of the massacre, is the only surviving adult member of the commune, and says he will abandon the two farms, called New Adam's and Olive Tree.

Grace Ministries reports that 1,500 people attended the Dec. 2 memorial service in Zimbabwe; blacks and whites, provincial leaders and villagers were there together. A goal of the commune was to bridge racial

(Continued on page 11)

## ACTS announces 1988 preachers

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Four Southern Baptist pastors have been selected as 1988 preachers for programs on the ACTS satellite network, announced Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Ed Young, pastor of Second Church, Houston, was named preacher for the morning edition of "The Baptist Hour." He will replace James Flaming, pastor of First Church, Richmond, Va.

Preacher for the evening "Baptist Hour" will be Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Church here. Gregory, recently elected president of the Texas Baptist Convention, has been the speaker on "Word of Life," a weekly Bible teaching program. Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Church was the preacher during 1987.

The two "Baptist Hour" speakers also will share responsibilities on "Baptist Hour" radio programs, Allen said. Gregory will be the radio preacher for the first six months, and Young is to be preacher for the last half of the year.

At the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee, objections were raised against Jackson continuing as "Baptist Hour" speaker because he had been a Southern Baptist Convention presidential candidate in 1987 and was being discussed as a possible candidate in 1988. Allen, who also is president of ACTS, said a change of speaker would be made as scheduled in January.

Commission administrators informed all four preachers of the objections

to a convention presidential candidate's selection as an ACTS preacher, but they did not ask the preachers to pledge that they would not seek an SBC office during 1988, RTVC Executive Vice President Richard T. McCartney told Baptist Press.

"We did not ask them to make a pledge or write a letter," McCartney said. "We simply made them aware of the objections that had been raised, but we did not require anything of them."

"We asked them to make their decisions (whether to accept the preaching positions) in light of these objections. It would be up to them to make a decision if someone approached them and told him he should seek office."

Preachers for the other two shows will be Frank Pollard and John Bisagno.

Pollard, pastor of First Church, Jackson, Miss., will replace Gregory on "Word of Life." Pollard previously was speaker on the "At Home With The Bible" series produced by the commission for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Bisagno will continue as speaker for the long-standing "Invitation to Life" evangelistic program. Bisagno, pastor of First Church, Houston, has been preacher on the revival program since it began in 1984.

Bisagno recently completed a new series of "Invitation To Life" programs that will be featured on ACTS during 1988. The changes will be effective Jan. 17.



Two Texas pastors will be speakers for the "Baptist Hour" on the ACTS television network and radio. They are (l to r) Ed Young, pastor of Second Church, Houston, and Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Church, Ft. Worth.

### Jan Cossitt's mother dies

Mrs. Louise Cossitt, 59, died at her home at New Albany on Saturday, Dec. 12, of a massive heart attack. She was the mother of Jan Cossitt, consultant, state WMU Department.

The funeral was held at United Funeral Service, New Albany, on Monday, Dec. 14, with Ed Alexander, pastor of Salem Baptist Church, Marshall County, and Steve Dial of Crossville Methodist Church in charge.

Survivors in addition to Jan Cossitt included two other daughters, Paula Carter, New Albany, and Sherry Hillensbeck, London, England; two sons, Mike Cossitt, New Albany, and Kevin Cossitt, Clinton; and seven grandchildren.

Mrs. Cossitt was an insurance agent with American General Life Insurance. She was a member of the Salem Baptist Church, Marshall County.

## HMB staff pledges prayer for missions

ATLANTA (BP) — More than 100 national staff members of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board pledged to pray daily for missions next year as a part of National Mission Prayer Plan sponsored by five Southern Baptist agencies.

This year, more than 30,000 people have called the board's toll free "PrayerLine" telephone number to get daily information from missionaries who have requested prayer. The board provides the daily prayer requests through the Home Missions

Intercessory PrayerLine for callers who dial 1-800-554-PRAY.

Through the HMB Prayer for Spiritual Awakening seminars and office, more than 45,000 prayer partners have been enlisted nationwide to pray daily for spiritual awakening in America and world-wide. Also, the board supplies WMU, Brotherhood and other denominational publications with more than 300 written prayer requests each year from missionaries.

## Church administrators plan to meet at Woodland Hills

A conference for church administrators will take place in Jackson, Jan. 14 at Woodland Hills Church.

Purpose of the meeting, according to printed materials, is "to provide suggestions, ideas, and information in the areas of financial forecasting, budget planning process, and administration of the church's money."

Conference leaders include John Rush, Andrew Economopoulos, Carl

Dickerson, and Ken Lundquist. Rush is vice president of the Stewardship Commission, SBC. Economopoulos is assistant professor of economics and finance at Millsaps College. Dickerson is pastor of Magnolia Street Church, Laurel. And Lundquist is business administrator at First Church, Jackson.

The program begins at 9:30 after 9:15 registration and adjourns at 3 p.m. There is no cost for the program.

## Harwell is ousted as Georgia editor

By Leisa Hammett-Goad  
and Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP) — By a vote of 57-54, Jack Harwell was ousted as editor of the Georgia Baptist Convention's weekly newspaper, *The Christian Index*, by the convention's executive committee.

The action came during a closed executive session after more than an hour's debate Dec. 15. Much of the discussion focused on whether the 120-member executive committee or the 10-member *Christian Index* board of directors should deal with the question.

Less than a month earlier, messengers to the Georgia Baptist Convention in Savannah expressed "profound gratitude and appreciation" for Harwell and voted overwhelmingly to "respectfully request" the 55-year-old editor to reconsider plans to take early retirement. The convention also voted to dismiss a review board that had threatened to fire Harwell if he wrote one more editorial it considered unacceptable.

Harwell had announced plans in October to retire after 21 years as editor because he felt he could no longer continue with editorial freedom and integrity.

At the convention in Savannah, Harwell told a cheering, standing crowd that in the light of the affirmation he had received, he would accept the invitation to reconsider his retirement, subject to negotiations with the *Index* board and the convention's executive committee.

The *Index* board met nearly three hours Dec. 14 concerning Harwell's employment and voted to refer the decision without any recommendation to the executive committee the next day. The *Index* board pointed out the executive committee is the final authority on personnel matters.

Committee members debated parliamentary procedure over what group has the proper authority to deal with the issue. The committee voted

(Continued on page 7)

## Three honored as exemplary SBC bivocational ministers

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — Pastors of churches in Alabama, Texas and Washington were honored as exemplary bivocational ministers during the Southern Baptist National Council of Bivocational Ministries.

Glenn Bentley, pastor of Mamre Church, Bynum, Ala., was honored for leading his church to baptize 23 people last year, making it the church with the highest ratio of baptisms per member in Calhoun Baptist Association. Bentley, who supports his ministry as a commercial flooring contractor, is president of the associational bivocational ministry fellowship.

Andy Stowe, pastor of Glen Garden Church, Fort Worth, received recognition for changing the direction of an urban church that four years ago had

only seven members and considered disbanding. Stowe, a paint contractor, last year baptized 38 new members and reported 48 decisions for Christ during Vacation Bible School. The church now is averaging about 50 participants in Bible study and worship attendance.

John Hastings, pastor of Pascoe Church near Richland, Wash., was honored as an exemplary bivocational pastor of a mission church. Hastings, a program manager for the Westinghouse-Hanford nuclear reactor, became pastor of the mission about four years ago. Two years ago, membership in the church dropped to only eight after 7,000 people lost their jobs in the area. Hastings has led the church to grow to more than 140 members.

## Gertrude Lovelace, pastor's widow, dies in Clinton

Mrs. Gertrude Lovelace, 94, died Dec. 14, 1987, in Clinton Country Manor Services were held 3 p.m. Dec. 16 at First Baptist Church, Clinton.

A native of Florence, Ala., Mrs. Lovelace had lived in the Clinton area for 60 years, moving from Louisville, Ky. She started the first kindergarten in Clinton, was dean of students at Blue Mountain College, housemother of nurses at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center and Anderson Hospital in Meridian. She was the widow of B. H. Lovelace, a former pastor of First Baptist Church, Clinton.

She is survived by her daughter, Grace Lovelace of Clinton a retired employee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorials can be made to the Dr. B. H. Lovelace Memorial Scholarship Fund, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, or the Building Fund of the First Baptist Church of Clinton.



## Allen Trust Fund established

The James S. and Alice F. Allen Reedy Acres Trust Fund has been established by Rev. and Mrs. Allen through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. Income from the fund will go to The Baptist Children's Village for the benefit of Reedy Acres, a satellite of The Baptist Children's Village located near Water Valley.

# 27 appointed to HMB strategy task force

ATLANTA (BP) — A 27-member task force to study and recommend future strategy and structure for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has been announced by HMB President Larry L. Lewis.

Lewis had been authorized by the board's 84 directors last July to appoint and convene the Strategy Planning Task Force. Lewis announced his appointments during the board's executive committee meeting in December.

The 27 appointees include six pastors; six vice presidents and executives on the HMB staff; four Baptist state convention executive directors, including one retired; four Baptist seminary professors, including two retired; the dean of the school of theology at a Baptist university; two associational directors of missions; one evangelist who is a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention; one church growth consultant; one Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union executive; and one state convention staff member assigned to starting new churches.

In addition, Lewis also appointed a dozen members of the HMB staff as observers to assist the committee as consultants and resource persons in their areas of expertise.

Scope of the study by the task force will include purpose of the agency, HMB objectives and strategies, and organizational structure.

Lewis said the board has been involved in strategy planning for many years and in 1983 adopted a major long-range plan called "Target: AD 2000" outlining the agency's objectives and goals as a part of the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust ministry campaign.

The board has not undergone major structural reorganization since 1971, Lewis observed. "Almost everyone I talk to agrees the board needs to reorganize, not for the sake of reorganization, but so that our structure better enables us to accomplish our strategy in achieving the objectives and goals of Bold Mission Thrust," he said.

The task force will meet for the first time Feb. 15-16, 1988. Other meetings

scheduled include sessions April 11-12; July 18-19 in St. Louis; and Aug. 29-30. All meetings except the July session will be in Atlanta. The group may need to meet again in the fall of 1988, Lewis said.

The pastors include Clark Hutchinson, of Eastside Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., and chairman of the HMB directors and James Chavis, former pastor of Dunwoody Baptist Church, both in suburban Atlanta; Joe Ratliff of the predominantly black Brentwood Baptist Church in Houston; Rick Warren of Saddleback Community Church in Laguna Hills, Calif.; Billy Weber of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas; and Richard Jackson of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, who has been mentioned as a possible nominee for president of the Southern Baptist Convention next June.

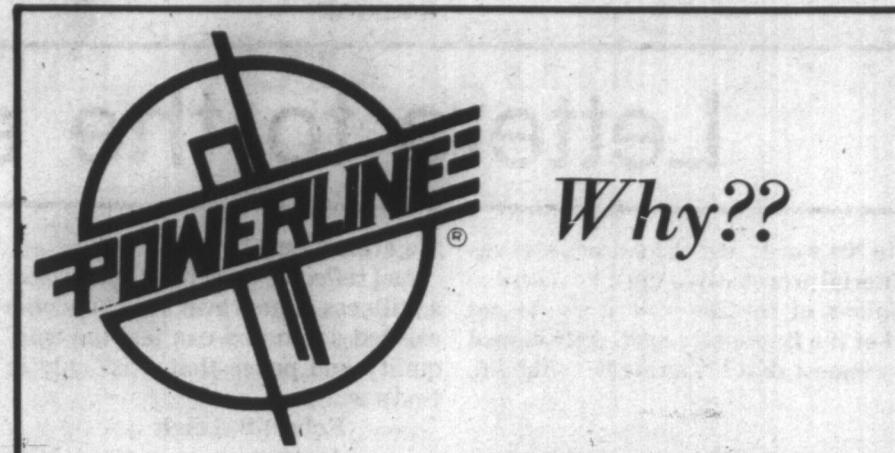
A former Southern Baptist Convention president, evangelist Bailey Smith of Atlanta, was named to the task force. Smith was SBC president from 1980-82.

State convention executive directors selected are Tal Bonham, and Ray Roberts, retired, both from the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio; James Currin from the Baptist Convention of New England; and C.B. Hogue from the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

Members appointed from Baptist seminaries and colleges included Charles Chaney, dean of the Redford School of Theology at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo.; Leonard Sanderson, visiting professor of evangelism at Midwestern Seminary; and one retired and two current professors at Southwestern Seminary: Danny Sanchez, associate professor of missions; Roy Fish, professor of evangelism; and Cal Guy, retired professor of missions.

Associational directors of missions named to the task force were Larry K. Martin of Boston and Ernie Perkins of Oklahoma City.

Also appointed were Bobbie Sorrill, associate executive director in the missions education system for Woman's Missionary Union; Ron



## Why??

SOUTHERN BAPTIST RADIO-TV COMMISSION / FORT WORTH, TX 76150

### QUESTION

Everywhere I look, it seems that people are having problems. One family I know has a baby with cystic fibrosis and in another the father is all messed up because of being in Vietnam. I don't understand how a good God can let so many terrible things happen — especially like letting good people die young or old people suffer all alone. Why doesn't God do something about the wars and crime and cruelty and prejudice? Doesn't he care?

### ANSWER

Your question is one which people have wrestled with since the beginning of time. It is hard to reconcile the idea of a good, loving God, with the reality of life as we know it with all its badness and pain. But the answer to both of your questions is "yes." God cares and he has done something about it.

The mistake we make is in thinking that the world as we see it is the way God intended it. But this world is corrupted by sin. People make wrong choices — sometimes on purpose, more often perhaps because of ignorance or carelessness. Innocent people are hurt by those choices, but God is not to blame for that suffering — except to the extent that he created a world in which people are interrelated to each other.

The alternative would be a world of isolated, unfeeling, uncaring robots. It is our capacity to love which leaves us open to pain. If we did not care, we would not suffer. But who wants to live in a world without love?

God's intention is for life to be full of peace and joy. Jesus said, "I have come to give you a more abundant life." That's what God has done about the problem of evil: He has sent Christ to bring us back into fellowship with himself and to show us how to live in peace and joy with each other. He does not override the consequences of the choices which we or others make. He does not upset the natural processes of nature in order to protect us from being hurt. But he goes with us as we move through this imperfect, difficult and eventually to bring good out of even the worst situation.

from Nashville; J.V. Thomas, church extension coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

HMB executives named to the committee are Bob Banks, executive vice president; Wendell Belew, associate vice president for missions strategy; and four vice presidents: Bob Hamblin, evangelism; Gerald Palmer, missions; Bob Bingham, services; and Leonard Irwin, planning.

HMB staff observers are four

regional coordinators: Jim Coldiron, Carlisle Driggers, Ernest Kelley, and Fermin Whittaker; six division directors: Paul Adkins of missions ministries, David Bunch of church extension, Oscar Romo of language missions, Bobby Sunderland of direct evangelism, Orrin Morris of research, and Kenneth Day of communication; and two department directors: Emmanuel McCall of black church relations; and Jim Newton of news and information.

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Thursday, December 24, 1987

## Latin church budgets double in campaign

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Church budgets in parts of Latin America are doubling, thanks to a stewardship campaign that uses some Southern Baptist money and manpower.

The campaign, known as Total Stewardship Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, is designed to lead Latin American Baptists toward an aggressive program of evangelism and missions.

Southern Baptists "can look forward to increased effort, manpower and teamwork with Latin America in winning the world to Christ," said Southern Baptist missionary Ben Bedford, treasurer of the campaign's coordinating committee.

A major goal of the campaign is to get Christians committed to giving time, money, and talents to spread the gospel, Bedford explained. It also could lead to greater self-support among Latin American churches.

Campaign coordinators want Baptists around the world to pray "specifically for this campaign at noon each day," Bedford said.

Already a Baptist church in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, has doubled its budget for 1988.

Workshops have been conducted during 1987 to train leaders. Each new leader is being challenged to train 10 others in 1988, "sort of in the principle of MasterLife," Bedford said. As many as 7,000 leaders will be trained in Latin America in 1988.

During the five-day workshops, individuals are taught financial planning so tithing will not be cumbersome. This applies to family budget planning, which extends into the church, local Baptist association and national convention.

The result of the emphasis on stewardship so far has been a 100 percent budget increase in some churches in Argentina, Barbados, and Brazil.

Despite the doubling of some church budgets, Bedford noted several were only half the size they needed to be in the first place.

Eric Miller writes for the FMB.

# Ruschlikon reflects Christmas around world

By Debbi Wyatt

the arrival of the three kings, according to Margarida Barros. Rosimara Deller maintains that in Brazil the gifts are from 'Papa Noel', Father Christmas, and are opened at midnight on the 24th of December. The children there put large boots on window sills so they may be stuffed with goodies.

Neil and Rosalie Hall, Contact Study Programme students from England, relate that caroling remains a major aspect of Christmas in Great Britain. The nativity play is also popular, as well as a traditional Christmas Eve church service. Turkey and Christmas pudding are considered staples for a Christmas meal in England.

Down under in Australia people eat their traditional Christmas dinner at noon out on the lawn, it being summer

there, explains David Hunter. Local villages trim a large community Christmas tree, and Santa Claus, the jovial old man in red, arrives on a fire truck to bring the children gifts.

Susanne Blythe tells how Scottish children leave a carrot for Santa's reindeer and sometimes, instead of hanging up a stocking, to be stuffed with goodies, industrious children instead hang up a pillowcase. Bagpipers usually appear around New Year's Day, making the first days of the new year as well as part of the Christmas celebration.

Santa Lucia is a major Christmas season custom in Sweden. Sven-Arne and Helen Persson explain that every city chooses its own 'Lucia' from among the most beautiful young women in town. She will wear a wreath of candles in her hair on the

morning of December 13 and walk through the city before day break followed by girls carrying candles. The Advent tradition is important also in Sweden, and a candle is lighted each week during Advent.

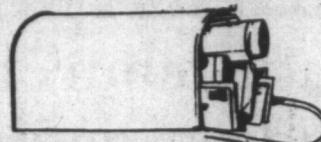
Burmese student K.D. Tu Lum asserts that Christmas is exclusively a Christian holiday in his country. Church members invite non-Christians to share a large Christmas dinner with them. It is a time of fellowship and family.

These varying traditions converge here at Ruschlikon, a community where students learn about the One who made Christmas possible.

Debbi Wyatt is enrolled this year in the Baptist Seminary of Ruschlikon, and serves as an EBPS student associate.

RUSCHLIKON, SWITZERLAND — Christmas is a special time. Joy, laughter, and gatherings with friends intermingle with special memories of home and family. Students at the Ruschlikon, Switzerland, International Baptist Theological Seminary also experience these feelings. Many of them will not return to their native lands at Christmas, yet they have brought with them their varying traditions of this celebration. The mention of Christmas brings a smile to each face at Ruschlikon, as students share their stories of loved ones and of the season's special meaning.

Many Christmas customs throughout the world stem from Europe. Among the most well-known of these are the German Christmas tree and the Advent calendar. German student



# Letters to the editor



Letters to the editor must be limited to 300 words and the editor reserves the right to trim those that are longer. Editorial prerogatives must be reserved under all circumstances, and the opinions of the letter writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Baptist Record. Only signed letters will be used, but the writer may request that his name be withheld.

## Clarke College funding

**Editor:**

I had written a few weeks ago raising a question about the cost of education at our Mississippi Baptist colleges. I understand that the cost for full-time equivalent student at Blue Mountain College is \$1,855 while the cost at Clarke is \$1,819. My question was why is that too much at Clarke and not too much at Blue Mountain.

I had hoped that the Education Commission, Dr. Nobles, or some of the powers that be would share this information at the convention. Since no one did, I felt compelled to do so. My intention is not to stir up a can of worms about Clarke College. I do believe that Mississippi Baptists are entitled to the facts. We did not have these facts when we voted for the merger. Incidentally, I voted for the merger.

The \$55,000 allocated for Clarke in the 1988 budget is just a band aid for the nearly \$150,000 of indebtedness. It would take two more years at this rate to pay it off, and by that time Clarke would probably owe that much more if the funding is not restored.

Come on Education Commission! Clarke has as much right to our Cooperative Program money as the other colleges. The only right thing to do is to restore the funding.

I would like to thank Dr. Compere and Dr. Nobles for their fairness and openness with the Convention Board. I believe that both men want what is best for Clarke.

Albert McMullen, pastor  
First Church, Stonewall

## Homes of Grace

**Editor:**

As volunteers with the Home Mission Board, we had the unique privilege of serving the first week in December with Bill Barton in Vancleave, Miss. The primary ministry of Brother Bill, Homes of Grace, is a ministry that is, to the best of our knowledge, without parallel. Never have we observed and experienced such deep concern and commitment to one's fellowman. Those in the Men's Home and some in the Haven (home for women and children) have experienced the gripping power of drugs and/or alcohol. It is their hope that through the Homes of Grace and the power of Jesus Christ this grip can be totally and forever released.

The ministry of the Homes of Grace for men, for women, and for those who are reaching the twilight years, is a ministry that is seriously in need of refining and expanding. It was obvious to us that the operations are continued on faith and on a shoestring budget. We encourage our fellow Christians to seriously look at Brother Bill's unselfish effort.

Nancy Arrants  
Glenn Arrants  
Lake Junaluska, N.C.

## Thanks for editorial

**Editor:**

Thanks for your prophetic editorial "Is There A Message . . . ?" I don't think I have ever written a letter about the controversy, but your editorial speaks with such prophetic force that I cannot refrain from writing.

Please keep up the good work. I hope every state paper in the convention picks up your editorial. It is perhaps the most important thing I have seen in print during these nine long years.

N. F. Greer  
Assistant to Executive  
Secretary  
Stewardship/Missions  
Alabama Baptist State  
Convention

## Right on target

**Editor:**

Your editorial "Is There A Message?" was right on target. Well spoken.

Best wishes to you.  
Joe N. McKeever, pastor  
First Baptist Church  
Charlotte, N.C.

## Thanks for Baptist Record

**Editor:**

We have begun receiving the Baptist Record in Brazil and look forward to getting it each week. Thank you for keeping us informed about "Baptist doings" in Mississippi. It is a great encouragement to receive any news from home.

Language learning continues to be a challenge for us, so we covet the continued prayers of Mississippi Baptists. We realize that our effectiveness as missionaries will be greatly affected by praying people.

Thank you for sending the Baptist Record.

John and Kathy Vaughn  
Brazil and Scooba, Miss.

## God's world

**Editor:**

As I was in attendance at church services, I felt the presence of God. Yes, God was there among the church membership as they worshipped and sang praises to Him.

As I sit in my rear yard, I see a number of stately pine, magnolia, and gum trees gently swaying in the afternoon breeze. Yes, God is near. The fleecy clouds overhead and the chirping birds as they flutter from tree to tree tell me this is God's domain! There is a reverence and quietness in God's world.

Later, I will tune in on the television set the national and local news. I will hear and see horrible things that man has done to man: the on-going wars being fought throughout the world, the kidnapping of innocent people, murders, robberies, accidents, etc. Yes, this is man's world. Man is never content; he is constantly stirring up

the atmosphere!

As I reflected back into God's world, a stillness comes over me. I become relaxed again and can feel the tranquility and peace that exist only in God's world.

Robert S. Leigh  
Jackson

## Right to life

**Editor:**

I would like to congratulate and commend the staff and board of the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center for their recently adopted pro-life policy. The Baptist hospital's new policy on abortion forbids the use of the Medical Center's facilities for abortions. The board adopted the resolution passed by the Mississippi Baptist Convention in 1985. Abortion destroys God's handiwork and violates the basic principles of Christian medical care. As Mississippi Baptists, we can be proud of our medical center and its board of directors for their courageous stand on the sanctity of human life.

Bill Conlee, President,  
Mississippi Right To Life

## Appreciative of conventions

**Editor:**

As is always the case, I enjoy receiving the Baptist Record and its help in keeping abreast with Baptist events in my home state as well as through the Southern Baptist Convention.

I read with much interest the reported results of the annual assembly of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. I must tell you that as I read how the spirit of this year's convention was one of unity within diversity, of constructive comments and decisions without controversy, of Spirit-lead participation without politics, of order where "loves reigns over Robert's rules," of bold commitments to common concerns, of peace and prayer and love, I felt proud to be called a Southern Baptist from Mississippi.

I was challenged and encouraged by Frank Gunn's presidential address and the convention sermon by Robert Self.

I was appreciative as I read that the convention voted to increase its participation in the Cooperative Program. This will affect the overall FMB budget, which will affect our mission endeavor in Brazil in general, and my ministry in particular. This news is especially encouraging since due to the lack of funds for this year and next many ministries will be put aside and many opportunities for witness will not be taken advantage of. Bold giving is essential.

I was comforted by the photo showing messengers praying together. If we, as Southern Baptists, are to stand firm and remain faithful to God and to each other in the face of our conflicts and trials, we must bend our knees and maintain a permanent attitude of prayer. Without a doubt, the SBC is suffering.

You noted in your editorial "music is always a vital part of the convention, and this year was no exception." As a music missionary the hearing of the convention music would be "icing on the cake." What a joy it would be to hear the various choirs, instruments, soloists, and especially the Mississippi Singing Churchmen. Are not convention events/sessions recorded on audio and/or video cassettes?

Tony L. Gray  
Missionary to Brazil  
Vitoria, Espirito Santo

## Additional tribute to Marguerite Briscoe

**Editor:**

I'm glad Melanie Fortenberry wrote that tribute to Miss Marguerite Briscoe, who died recently at age 92. May I add mine?

When our Lord died, the centurion, no doubt, thought to himself, "Somebody ought to say something." And so he said it. The thought had occurred to me that we must not let this unique and godly lady pass from our midst without calling attention to her.

To be in her presence was to experience Jesus Christ a little more; to hear her pray was to intrude on an intimate relationship; to know her love was to feel very special and honored.

I said to her once, "You are the finest Christian I've ever known!" She said, "Oh, honey, if you just knew." God alone has recorded the many rootless singles she took into home and gave meals, love, witness, and prayer. She lived the life some of us preach about and raised for all who knew her the definition of Christian love.

Joe McKeever, pastor  
First Baptist Church  
Charlotte, N.C.

The world contains 1.6 billion disabled persons (80 percent in developing countries, a third being children, mostly among absolutely poor in Africa, Asia, Latin America); 13 million lepers; 21 million totally blind persons; 48 million psychotics (with severe mental disorders); 85 million severely handicapped children; 205 million partially handicapped children; 450 million deaf (320 million partially deaf); and 950 million psychoneurotics.

Pray that new work begun this year in Lesotho, a small African nation, and on Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa, will bear much fruit. Pray that many will hear the gospel because of the ministry and witness of missionaries Fred and Sami Sorrells in Madagascar and Randy and Nancy Sprinkle in Lesotho.

## Devotional

### The gift that never grows old

By David Allen

A few months before Christmas my wife bought for our two-year-old son a toy train set that had a little red engine that is battery powered. This engine not only can pull the little cars on the track, but it can also make a continual racket as it goes "choo, choo, choo!" My son discovered the train about two months before Christmas, and within a few short days all the newness of that toy train had worn off. At least it had worn off for my wife and me. You see, the train was not for two-year-old boys. Jonathan is too small to be able to put the little wheels of the engine and the various cars on the track. Therefore he would just carry that little red engine all over the house in his hands as its little light would shine and its little motor would make a horrendous racket.



Allen

This was all right for awhile; but after a week of hearing that little engine, we began to look forward to the day those batteries would play out. The little train is no doubt like many other toys that children and adults alike received this Christmas. They seem exciting and fascinating at first, but after a short while the newness begins to wear off and that toy or that new set of clothes or that new stereo or whatever doesn't seem to satisfy you as much as it did when you first saw it. That is the way it is with nearly anything you can find on the face of this earth.

Yet at this special time of the year I am reminded of one gift that I received many years ago that has never grown old or ceased to satisfy my needs. That gift is the gift of salvation that I received from my Savior Jesus Christ. That gift will never grow old; it will never wear out; it can never be lost; I can't lose it in a fire; I don't have to worry about anyone stealing it. It is mine for eternity to enjoy.

I know that eventually every material thing on the face of this earth will one day be destroyed; yet the gift that I have received from Jesus will last for an eternity. My prayer for us is that as we approach the beginning of a new year we will make a new commitment to share the gift that never grows old with those around us who do not know our blessed Lord and that if the Lord tarries another year that this time next year there will be many more people who are enjoying the gift that never grows old!

David Allen is pastor, Shuqualak Church.

# Love InDeed — A spiritual gymnasium

By Tim Nicholas

A church member called the Loving Pet Shop looking for it. Another person came into First Church, Columbus, looking for Mary Lovinideedy. They were both a bit confused about the name of the organization, but had no doubts about its nature.

The Love InDeed ministry at First Church, Columbus, exists to help people. It came out of a prayer group of about eight laypersons there several years ago who prayed that the downtown church might become more aware and meet needs of the people in the community.

In January of 1986, Tom Pelphrey came as minister of education. He was only on the job a couple of days before some of those laypersons went to him telling him of their vision for a helping ministry.

Pelphrey happened to be married to a person with some experience in that direction. Cindy, Mrs. Pelphrey, had 15 years behind her as a social worker in government, private, and secular agencies.

Meetings were held. A needs assessment of the community was made and financial possibilities were considered.

What evolved was an organization that, led by Mrs. Pelphrey as director, involves about 150 members of First Church.

Among the ministries of Love InDeed are

\*\*\*An assistance referral team that involves 23 women on a rotating schedule in the office at the church. These interview clients, offer counseling, and help with crisis intervention.

\*\*\*A literacy training team which currently has 36 trained Laubach workers who are able to teach adults how to read. This is one-on-one and there are 11 teachers with 13 students right now. In the year and a half of Love InDeed's life, four students have completed the Laubach program which enables a person to read at about the 6th grade level.

\*\*\*A prison ministry team which works in cooperation with Prison Fellowship, a national group. There is Sunday visitation at the city jail along with Bible study. They hope to get into a discipleship program with those prisoners. Each person who makes a profession of faith in Jesus Christ goes through an introductory course in the Christian life called "Survival Kit for New Christians."

\*\*\*Followup workers visit or phone each person who goes to the ministry for any kind of assistance. "This morning," says Mrs. Pelphrey, "a woman came in, about age 50, employed but not making ends meet financially, is a Christian, but not making ends meet." A followup worker will visit the woman.

\*\*\*The job discovery team exists to help clients find work. "We try to find the ditchdigging jobs the carpenter can do when there is no carpentry," says Mrs. Pelphrey. The group also helps people prepare an application form so that all pertinent information such as job history can be at hand when applying for a job. And there is a list of church members who have a need to employ people, usually on a short term basis. "We do not hire anybody," says Mrs. Pelphrey. They only give the names to the prospective employers. "This has probably been one of the most fruitful areas of our ministry — about seven people in the past month have gotten jobs — some just by helping them look through the want ads."

\*\*\*Emergency services team members (for a while they called this the burnout team) help the displaced, battered wives, prisoners back into the community. There is a crisis closet with pots and pans, blankets, linens, some furniture. This help includes pregnant teens who plan to keep their babies. They've helped several with apartment furnishings. In fact, in January, a teen parent support group will begin where the girls come to the church a couple of hours a week where there will be child care while they take courses in health and nutrition, job discovery, education information, and child care and parenting.

\*\*\*The handyman team was developed for members to help other members who needed odd jobs done such as minor auto, home repairs, and stopped up drains. The men helped renovate an old motel so the owners could become self-supporting and they helped repair the battered wives shelter.

\*\*\*And the transportation team was developed to get some of the elderly members home and to check their houses for them. Mrs. Pelphrey says the members haven't availed themselves of the service, but opportunities for ministry have arisen. One elderly couple is separated by having

to live in different nursing homes because of different medical needs. Team members drive the woman to her husband's nursing home twice weekly for visits. The team also took a woman with a brain tumor to Birmingham for treatments.

First Church pastor Bobby Douglas, only at the church for five months, says the ministry "provides an outlet for us as a congregation to express our concern for people who are having difficulties." It also "puts us in a position of saying openly to the community that we care and we are interested," he says.

Changes take place through the Love InDeed ministry. Mrs. Pelphrey tells of a 32-year old mother of two, one child has paralysis, her mother has terminal cancer. Her only income is Social Security insurance — won't take welfare. Referred to Love InDeed by another agency, she dumped a bag of bills on the table. "I know you're not going to help me. Nobody ever helps me, but I am here," she said. The woman had up to four jobs at a time to try to make ends meet. She tried to start a housecleaning business but had to quit when her mother got sick. "This woman will not quit," says Mrs. Pelphrey. Since visiting the ministry, "she has restored her faith in the Lord, self image improved. Now she calls us regularly for prayer needs for her friends and is helping one of our members with housecleaning and won't take money for it." Mrs. Pelphrey adds, "She's going to make it."

The ministry has reached out in virtually every area of life. There is no religious, racial, or other qualification for anyone to get help.

Mrs. Pelphrey and her husband feel Love InDeed is a great tool for helping Christians reach out. "Our concept of education is to equip Christians to minister by helping them discover their spiritual gifts and exercise them" she says. If that is so, Love InDeed is a veritable spiritual gymnasium.

As Richard Alford, consultant, Cooperative Missions Department, MBCB, said, "The Love InDeed ministry of First Baptist Church, Columbus, has found a way to put caring people in touch with persons in need. They have found reasons to do, rather than not to help. This is Christian ministry at its finest-following Jesus' example (Acts 10:38)."



Cindy Pelphrey, director of the Love InDeed ministry in Columbus, poses with a can of "Love Soup."

## Harwell is ousted

(Continued from page 4)

57-40 to sustain the ruling of the chairman, Gene Tyre, pastor of First Church, Newnan, that the executive committee is the proper authority.

The executive committee then went into executive session for the first time in the memory of many members, voting 57-54 with one abstention against a motion asking Harwell to continue as editor and pledging to him the support of the committee.

Chuck Bugg, pastor of First Church, Augusta, who made the motion asking Harwell to remain as editor, said he is shocked and disappointed by the vote. "I think it was a severe mistake for the executive committee to disregard and ignore the strong sentiments expressed by messengers to the convention in Savannah," he noted.

Harwell said afterwards he is deeply disappointed and surprised: "I am truly sorry because I wanted to stay and thought the convention wanted me to stay, but I have to honor the vote of the committee. They are my employers."

Harwell will retire Dec. 31, with the benefits and severance pay previously approved by the Index board — a year's salary, ownership of the Index

car, and medical insurance. His retirement pension will not be in effect until age 65. He is considering almost a dozen job offers, he reported.

Harwell told reporters "the issue (surrounding his retirement), is not Jack Harwell. The issue is editorial freedom and integrity."

The executive committee members wanted him out because he was controversial, he said: "They think when I'm gone they'll feel peace again. But the controversy is not settled, and I don't think it will end for a long time."

Jack Lowndes, the convention's director of church-minister relations, will become acting editor Jan. 1. Lowndes, a former pastor from Savannah and former executive director of the Baptist Convention of New York, has previously been editor of The New York Baptist.

A search committee composed of Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist, Marietta; Ron Gaynor, pastor of First Church, Tucker; Smith as chairman; plus Tyre and James N. Griffith, executive director of the convention, as ex-officio, will nominate an editor to the Index board and executive committee, Smith said.

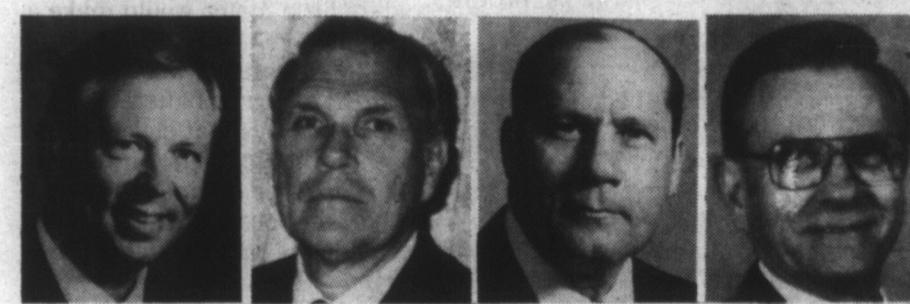
Hammett-Goad and Newton write for the Home Mission Board.

## REA will meet at Biloxi Hilton

The 1988 meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association will take place Feb. 18-20 at the Biloxi Hilton Hotel.

This annual meeting is designed to offer skill-sharpening conferences and fellowship among the state's Baptist educators. Special interest sessions are to be offered the various age group leaders.

For more information, contact Jan Cossitt, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.



## Foundation elects new officers

These are the new officers of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. They are Bill Baker, re-elected president; Oliver Ladnier, vice president; William (Bill) Cassell, treasurer; and Hayes Graves, chairman, executive committee. Baker is pastor of First Church, Clinton. Ladnier is pastor of First Church, Magee. Cassell is employed by Interstate Merchandise Warehouse in Meridian. And Graves is a retired banker and builder from Brandon.

No issue December 31

# On Christmas Day in Thailand — business as usual

By Maxine Stewart

Christmas Day has little significance for the vast majority of people living in Thailand. The day begins like any one of a number of days. Fresh vegetables, fruits and freshly slaughtered meat are taken to the early morning open markets as on any other day, except Buddhist holy days (every 8th day) when no animal is killed.

Shops open. Vendors with portable carts selling noodles, sliced fresh juicy pineapple or other tropical fruits, spicy curries, feather dusters, plastic wares, piping hot fresh corn-on-the-cob (shucked or unshucked), hot drippy pancakes or waffles are as busy as they were the day before or will be the day after.

Young men deliver bags of crushed ice by bicycle on Christmas Day as they would on the Fourth of July. The weather is about the same.

Pigs, in their individual baskets, are transported to the slaughter house. It is no 'pig-in-a-poke' as the baskets are woven with large air-holes. The baskets are made of heavy, durable bamboo which gives the pigs a certain amount of protection from the heavy load.

Students are seen in the glow of the early morning sun in their school uniforms hustling to school to begin another day of studies. No one says, "We should get out of school for a week or ten days. This is Christmas!" Mostly, it is just another day for them.

In Bangkok, the capital city, people associate Christmas as 'Santa Claus Day' rather than the day Jesus Christ was born. The 'commercial missionaries' are working hard to promote this.

On Christmas Day thousands of Thai people can be seen going to their favorite temple or shrine with their flower garlands, candles, joss sticks and golden rod. Many offer a wooden elephant, a return for favors granted. Birds in 8-inch square cages are released as on any other day to make merit. Turtles and fish are purchased and released as another merit-making effort. Neither the seller nor the purchaser knows about Christ, the One whose birth we celebrate on Christmas Day. They do not know that any amount of merit would never be acceptable to Jesus who has already paid the price for our sins.

University students can be seen lined up on Christmas Day to register. (Mary and Joseph were familiar with registering.)

On Christmas Day the portable shoe repair shops along the sidewalks mend shoes, perhaps sandals such as Jesus wore, while the customer patiently waits.

Construction workers carry their bricks and mortar on Christmas Day as any other day.

Welders, with their blue sparks flying, are not aware of the star that shined over Bethlehem the night Jesus Christ was born.

Teachers instruct their students, yet most of them are unaware of the Master Teacher, Jesus.

Thousands of fishermen in Thailand never heard of the greatest catch in history, instructed by Jesus to Peter.

Bus drivers haul thousands of people in Thailand without realizing the vastness of their responsibility, or of

the value of life itself, while many of the passengers are riding into eternity in bus accidents — without Christ.

Eighty per cent of the Thai people are said to be farmers. For the most part, these people are not aware that it is the Giver of Life, Jesus, who causes the plants to grow and produce. The majority of them have never heard of Christmas Day.

Raising chickens is a growing business in Thailand. Most of these people have never heard that Jesus watches over us "as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings."

Few of the doctors and nurses who fill the many hospitals throughout Thailand have ever heard of the Great Physician who was born on Christmas Day.

The officials of Thailand who have power and authority to run the country do not, for the most part, know The One who has all power and authority and that we celebrate His birth on Christmas Day.

Christianity arrived in Thailand as early as 1493 by way of the Portuguese. The first two appointed missionaries arrived in 1555, both martyred, but others followed. In 1662, three French Bishops arrived. They found 11 priests, all Portuguese but one. The Thai people, for the most part, were so unresponsive they were working among the foreigners. The first Protestant missionary to live in Thailand arrived in 1828.

Although this dates back many, many years, relatively few people in Thailand know anything about Christmas. Like most Asians who have a national religion, the Thai people, in general, consider Christianity as a foreigners' religion. They do not know that Jesus was Asian.

As one steps out into the hustle and bustle of the busy streets of Bangkok, it might be difficult to guess that it is Christmas Day. Business as usual is taking place throughout the country. Unless one knows Christ, or has a witnessing Christian friend, it would be almost impossible to tell it from any another day.

Missionaries and Thai Christians long to make Christ known in Thailand so that the people can celebrate Christmas as the day Christ the Saviour was born for all mankind and not a day when business is as usual.

Maxine Stewart is missionary press representative in Thailand.



It is "Business as Usual" as temple dancing girls perform on Christmas Day for people who have paid them to dance for the spirits and make merit. Many girls are dedicated to this task of dancing at the temples. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)



It is "Business as Usual" on Christmas Day for 'mother's little helper' as this small child washes the dishes diners have used at her mother's sidewalk cart, getting them ready for others who will come to enjoy Christmas dinner with them. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)



The 'carwash' stays open even on Christmas Day in Chacheungsao, Thailand, as this trucker washes his prized vehicle at his usual 'carwash.' One of the two washers can be seen behind the cab of the truck, washing away the dirt collection of his last run. Yes, it is "Business as Usual" on Christmas Day. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)



It is "Business as Usual-on Christmas Day" as these diners sit down to Christmas dinner in Bangkok, Thailand, in the open-air dining area under a tree. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)



The Buddhist monks do "Business as Usual" on Christmas Day as they collect foods in the early morning on the streets of Bangkok, Thailand. These young ladies make their daily offering of food on Christmas morning without knowing that Jesus Christ was born to forgive their sins, which no amount of merit-making can do. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)



This little Thai girl is not wondering what she is going to get for Christmas. It is "Business as Usual" with her as she sells her lottery tickets on the street of Bangkok, Thailand. She is not aware that children in some parts of the world receive toys at Christmas time. She doesn't go to Sunday School to hear about Jesus whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas Day. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)



It is "Business as Usual — on Christmas Day" for this beggar who takes some Christmas dinner from a tray of food that has been offered at a 'spirit house' in Bangkok, Thailand. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)

# SCRAPBOOK

## Mary: on looking at her Babe

"Sweet little Babe! How peacefully  
You lie,  
Suckling at my breast  
Without a cry.

(Look, Joseph! See,  
He clasps my hand with fingers wee!  
And all the while, with mild eyes,  
Gazes up at me.)

How perfectly You are formed,  
From downy Head to tiny Feet,  
Human flesh you are,  
All soft and rosy-sweet.

### Stars of December

When I look up at the star-studded sky.  
On a cold December night  
I marvel at the beauty I see,  
And I know that all is right.

The stars are the brightest ever  
With moonbeams glistening below;  
I like to think that's the way they looked  
To the Wise Men long ago.

Even now one star is brighter;  
It shines like it's all aglow  
It twinkles and sparkles and seems to convey  
A message to the meek and the low.  
That's why I love December —  
Because of the beautiful nights;  
No matter how many problems I have  
They suddenly seem all right!

—Ruth Norsworthy Crager  
State Line



### What would we do without Christmas?

Oh, what would we do without Christmas,  
The most joyous time of the year? . . .  
No Christmas trees loaded with beautiful lights,  
No beautiful shining star? . . .  
Oh, what would we do without Christmas,  
The most joyous time of the year?

### Not only at Christmastime

Of all the birds, no matter size or hue,  
The mocking bird is my favorite by far.  
Not beautiful birds in their coats of grey  
With just a touch of white, seen only as they fly.  
They wouldn't win a beauty contest, but then  
I've always heard real beauty is within.  
And so it is with the mocking bird —  
Their songs are beautiful, beautiful!

They sing and sing their little hearts out.  
Sometimes I think one comes to my window  
Just to sing for me.  
They sing in the darkest of nights and in the rain.

As I'm writing this  
One is defending his dogwood berries.  
He makes it fine with a few intruders,  
But when a swarm attacks, he calls for help.

If they can sing amid the storms, then why can't we?  
For every intruder, God will help if we'll just call.  
Jesus gave His life for whosoever,  
But the world sees no beauty in Him.

I believe God speaks to us in whispers  
From the inner beauty of the mocking bird,  
And not only at Christmastime,  
But every day of the year.

—Ruby Singley  
Columbia

And yet . . . and Yet, You're more than man,  
I know You are divine;  
Did not the angel say you're Christ,  
You, — Child of mine!

I wonder greatly as I gaze  
Upon You, Babe so wee,  
For God has come to earth in You,  
— Marvelous mystery!"

—Lois P. Harlow  
Meridian

### Would Noah have seen the star?

Why was the rainbow placed in the sky?  
And why Christ's symbol a star?  
Why must the earth-bound lift his eye  
To loftier goals afar?

The answer is plain as plain can be —  
It simply sums up to this:  
They're placed up high so all can see  
From the depths of the lowest abyss.

Our vision's level can be barred by a hill,  
And no need for eyes has a mole,  
But the lifted gaze can feed and fill  
The seeking and hungry soul.

Though hedges of thorns embitter our cup  
There's no ceiling or roof on high;  
The wise men and shepherds and Noah looked up;  
The promise was found in the sky.

—Valeria Boyd Howell  
Ripley



### Christmas reflections

When I consider my dear Savior's birth  
The gift that he gave to all of the earth,  
The love and compassion he had for man —  
Only a great God could conceive such a plan.

Man was enslaved, in bondage indeed  
Redemption from sin was the greatest need  
Jesus came forth that first Christmas day  
In human form to provide man a way.

Jesus lived his life, an example to give  
How his way of life is supposed to be lived,  
To think of others and not of yourself,  
And how to be happy with what you have left.

Give him your life and worry will cease;  
Your life will be one of contentment and peace.  
When you make him your Savior and Lord  
The victory is yours; you have gained the reward.

—C. B. May Jr.  
Smithdale



### The gift

If you had seen  
the star that night,  
would you have gone  
to find the site?

Would have left  
your world behind,  
not knowing where  
or what you'd find?

Would have left  
your work and play,  
to find the place  
where Jesus lay?

The shepherds did.  
The wise men too.  
They did not stop  
until they knew!

And even now,  
it's not too late.  
He still waits  
at heaven's gate.

Love is the gift  
he wants to leave,  
deep in your heart  
on Christmas Eve.

—Nelda R. Broom  
Pascagoula



### The joy of Christmas

Sing me a carol, sweet and clear  
To let me know Christmas is here.

Sing about the star blazing white  
On Bethlehem that holy night.

Sing of the manger filled with hay  
Where Mary laid her son, they say.

Sing of the angels from above  
Who praised God for his gift of love.

Sing of shepherds who left their sheep  
To see the newborn Child asleep.

Sing of the Wise Men who journeyed far,  
Found Christ — gave him gold, incense, myrrh.

Today may we kneel at his feet,  
And worshipping our Lord, repeat  
"Glory to God,  
in the highest,  
on earth, peace,  
good will to men."

—Eunice Barnes  
Pascagoula



## Christmas music



The Benton-Tippah Association Youth Choir presented the musical, REJOICE IN JESUS, at First Church, Ripley, Dec. 6 and at Ashland Baptist Church Dec. 9. The choir is composed of young people from the churches of both counties. This is the first year to use a combined choir, but plans are

to make it an annual event. Co-directors were Anthony Mitchell and Lola M. Autry. Rehearsal accompanist was Mrs. Hope Stone. Harry Phillips is Benton-Tippah association director of missions.

## George Canzoneri dies in Florida at 60

George A. Canzoneri, 60, died Dec. 14 at Hollywood, Fla. Funeral services were held on Dec. 19 in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., and a graveside service was held on Dec. 23 at Lakewood Memorial Park, Jackson, Miss.

Canzoneri, a former resident of Jackson, Miss., Georgia, and Alabama, was a member of Worship Center Baptist Church, Plantation, Fla. He was president at the time of his death, of the Florida Chaplains Association.

He received his bachelor's degree from Mississippi College, a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary, and a master's degree in

psychology and counseling from Nova University, Ft. Lauderdale. He did clinical pastoral counseling in New Orleans Baptist Hospital.

Canzoneri had served as pastor of Baptist churches at Highhill, Madden, and Buckatuna, Miss., worked at the Baptist Children's Village, and was under appointment by the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, from 1959 to 1966, serving from 1959 to 1963 in Brazil. He was chaplain in hospitals in Georgia and Alabama, at Sunland Training Center, Miami, Fla., and at South Florida State Hospital in Hollywood, Fla., from which he retired on medical disability in 1978.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Betty Ray Canzoneri of Davie, Fla.; sons, David Canzoneri of Keller, Texas, and Marcus Canzoneri of Camp Lejeune, N.C.; daughters, Gale Canzoneri of Davie, Fla., and Mrs. Cathy Hains of San Pedro, Calif.; mother, Mrs. Mabel Canzoneri (Mrs. Joe), of Jackson, Miss.; sister, Antonina Canzoneri of Jackson, Miss.; brothers, Robert Canzoneri of Columbus, Ohio, and Joe Canzoneri of Jackson, Miss.; and four grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the building fund at Worship Center Baptist Church, 11801 W. Broward Blvd., Plantation, Fla., 33325, or to the American Heart Association.

## Names in the News



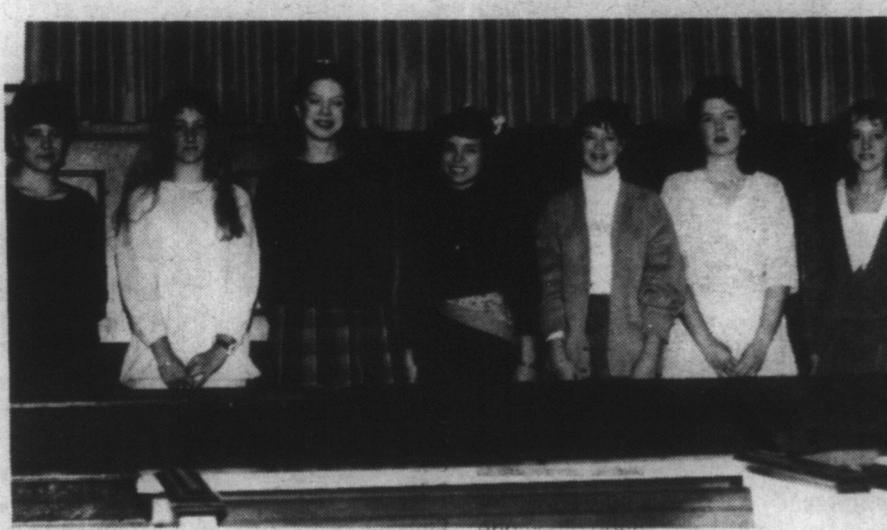
New deacons ordained by First Church, Flowood are pictured, (left to right) T. J. Bryant, Don Perkins, and E. C. DeWitt.

Each was given a Certificate of Ordination and a gift book, Now that You're a Deacon by Howard Foshee. Their wives received a book by Martha Nelson, On Being A Deacon's Wife.

Ricky Gray is pastor.

Margaret Fairburn of Tylertown received the master of divinity degree from Southeastern Seminary during commencement exercises on Dec. 12. She is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Ben Fairburn. A graduate of Mississippi College and Golden Gate Seminary, she is a career missionary in Liberia.

W. Gordon Hobgood Jr. will become executive vice president/chief operating officer of the Annuity Board on Jan. 31. Hobgood, who was serving as chairman of trustees for the Annuity Board, resigned as a trustee to accept election to the executive staff. The 55-year-old banker is managing director for the Trust Life of Business at First RepublicBank Corporation, Dallas.



### Washington Association elects "M" Night queens

Washington Association elected "M" Night queens at the annual Associational "M" Night held Nov. 23 at Greenfield Church. Each church choose one young lady between the ages of 15 and 19 to represent their church at "M" Night. The "M" Night and Church Training queen were elected in the following manner; each pastor represented 10 points, Church Training director — 5 points, leaders in Church Training — 2 points, and all other members represented one point. The attendance goal was 250 and the association had 257 at "M" Night.

Pictured are the queens representing their churches (from left to right), Heather Stokes, Darlove; Holly Wright, Emmanuel; Michelle Laney, Greenfield, "M" Night queen; Ellen Smith, Parkview, Greenville, Church Training queen; Jenny Galey, Calvary; Tracy Johnson, Alexander Memorial; and Tracey McWhorter, Southside.

Sonny Redwine is associational Church Training director, and Roy D. Raddin is director of missions. Mose Dangerfield, state Church Training director, delivered the evening message.

## Mississippi Baptist activities

Dec. 28-29 Youth Evangelism Conference; Mississippi College; 1:00 p.m., 28th-4:30 p.m., 29th (EVAN)



### Christmas comes early

Christmas came early this year for eight elementary school students at the Baptist Student Union at Jones County Junior College. A program was presented by the Puppet Team and real life characters depicting the birth of Jesus Christ. Afterwards, refreshments were served and then the sharing of gifts for each of the eight children. This was conducted by the Executive Council of the BSU. Each child received a small gift, two pairs of shoes plus school clothes sufficient for one week. Sixty people participated in this Christmas celebration for the children on Dec. 11 at 2:30 p.m. at the BSU Center in Ellisville.

### New special, 'The Peace of Christmas' to be broadcast on TV Dec. 25

"The Peace of Christmas," an NBC News Special Program observing how various Christian communities throughout the world celebrate the joyous holiday, will be broadcast on NBC-TV Friday, Dec. 25 (10-11 a.m. NYT).

The program will be anchored by NBC News Correspondent Robert Abernethy from Williamsburg, Va., home of historic Bruton Parish Episcopal Church. For the program, NBC News crews will visit various churches and communities to tape religious services and yuletide gatherings conveying the holiday messages of peace, hope and understanding.

Correspondent Martin Fletcher will report from Bethlehem on an orphanage and hospital serving children of Jewish, Christian or Moslem backgrounds. Fletcher will explore the meaning of Christmas through the children and the work of the dedicated staff. Correspondents Ed Rabel in Nicaragua and Mike Boettcher in famine-ridden Africa will report on how the message of peace is being conveyed in those two troubled areas of the world.

In Manila, Correspondent Steve Mallory will report how some residents of the Philippines suffering tremendous poverty seek the peace of Christmas. Additionally, NBC News Correspondent Roger O'Neil will report on Christmas for the officer candidates at the Air Force Academy in Colorado.

Lloyd Siegel is the executive producer of the NBC News Special Program. Susan Dutcher and Maryellen Meehan are the producers.

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*Just for the Record*

Pleasant Home Church of Laurel observed Elzie Moss Day on Nov. 22 in honor of Elzie Moss, who served as pastor of the church from 1951-55. He was also licensed and ordained at Pleasant Home Church. Moss preached during the morning worship service, at which time the adult choir also presented the Thanksgiving Cantata, "To God Be the Glory."

Dinner on the grounds was served afterward honoring Moss, his wife, Pearl, and their family. In an afternoon service, Michael Moss, son of Mr. and Mrs. Moss, and pastor of Mt. Zion Church, Clarke Association, sang several songs and preached.

Pictured, l to r, are McFatter, pastor of Pleasant Home Church, Mrs. Pearl Moss, Elzie Moss, Michael Moss, and Ron Stevens, chairman of deacons.



First Church, Carthage, held ground breaking day, Nov. 22, for its new Family Life Center. From left, are, Randy Von Kanel, pastor; David Satterwhite, director of missions for Leake County Association; Ted LeCren, chairman of deacons; Earl Kelly, executive director of Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; James Gregory, building committee chairman; Paul McLane, building contractor; James Lee, architect; Billy Bunker, associate architect; Ed Brashier, minister of music; and Susan Kinton, minister of education.



The Acteens of First Church, Ocean Springs, made Thanksgiving baskets for the residents of the Dorchester House, a primary care center. They made pine cone turkeys to put in the baskets. Pictured are Mary Tyler, Amanda Smith, Barbara Mauer, and Hope Milam. The leaders are Ruth Smith and Debbie Miller.

Paul D. Aultman is pastor.

## Missionaries killed

(Continued from page 3)  
strife through the love of Jesus Christ. Blacks and whites worked as equals to develop the vegetable farm, said the mother of David Emerson, one of those slain. What was started by those in the commune is too important to let stop, said several of the memorial service speakers.

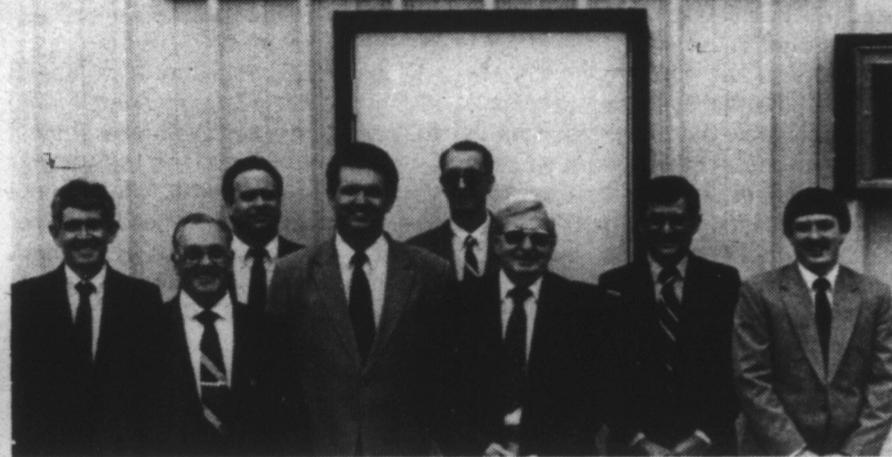
"They planted the Word, too," said JoAnne Emerson. "I think that what they did was marvelous."

## Court splits

WASHINGTON (BP) — An equally divided U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed with a 4-4 vote lower decisions striking down an Illinois law requiring underage pregnant women to notify their parents before obtaining abortions.

More than 20 states have laws similar to the Illinois statute, but about half are under court injunctions forbidding their enforcement.

## THRASHER BAPTIST CHURCH FAMILY LIFE CENTER



Dedication services for the new Family Life Center at Thrasher Church (Prentiss County) were held Sunday, Dec. 6. Pictured are the deacons and pastor of the church (front, l-r) Thomas Chase and Bob Davidson, Pastor Danny Sparks, Edd Manley, Ray Langston, Ronnie Johnson; (back, l-r) Gary Huddleston, and Charles Loveless.



Southway Church, Brookhaven, recently held a recognition service for its GAs. The theme was "Tell the Good News."

Pictured, front row, are Samantha Fauver, Misty Allred, Christy Barlow, Amy Hill. Second row, Diane Fauver, Stephanie Rushing, Kipp Cotten, Pepper Mullins. GA leaders are Daveen McCullough, Julia Richardson, and Jennifer Davis.

## Off the Record

The diner I frequent features a window display of its specialty — assorted cream pies. One evening as I lingered over a cup of coffee and chatted with the waitress, a small, tough-looking kid came in.

"How much is da pie, sister?" he spat at the waitress.

"Seventy-five cents," she answered.

He hesitated, fingering some coins in his pocket, "How much is da Jell-O?"

"Sixty-five cents."

"Gimme dat," he demanded, handing her the correct change. He wolfed down the Jell-O and bolted out. "I'd have given him the pie for 65 cents if he hadn't acted so tough and called me sister," said the waitress.

I nodded in agreement. But as she lifted the boy's empty dish, we stared at each other sheepishly. Under it was a ten-cent tip. — Wayne Buckingham.

## Staff Changes

Martin Romero of New Iberia, La., has accepted the call of Montrose Church as pastor following the retirement of James Pugh Sr. who served the church for 22 years.

He is married to the former Patricia Cooper of Goss, and they have three children — Anthony, 10, Johnathan, 4, and Kimberly, 2.

Romero was licensed to preach Mar. 25, 1983 and has done mission work in Montana and Mexico.

At the request of Montrose Church he was ordained to the gospel ministry by his church, Society Hill, Oakvale, Nov. 29, 1987.

James D. Whittington recently became pastor of Cliff Temple Church, Natchez. Whittington has been out of Mississippi for seven years. He goes to Cliff Temple Church from Kentucky. Charles Heltman has been interim pastor at Cliff Temple for 17 months.

## Senior Adult Corner

Members and workers of the homebound department were special guests of the Young At Heart group of South Side Church, Meridian, Christmas luncheon, Dec. 4. The guests were introduced by Mrs. Doris Seale, director of the homebound department. The program of Christmas scripture and carols was led by the Care Group Quartet; Mrs. Chris Carver, Mrs. Linda Crews, Louie Godwin, P. O. Weaver, and Mrs. Rachel Godwin, pianist. The 55 persons attending joined the quartet in singing. Wayne Riley is pastor.

## EVANGELIST RICK STANLEY



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January 8, 1988

7:30 p.m.

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Tupelo, Mississippi

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Youth Ministry

Thursday, December 24, 1987

# New federal student aid policy flawed, Baptist officials contend

By Lonnie Wilkey

WASHINGTON (BP) — A new U.S. Department of Education policy that could cause some Southern Baptist colleges to lose all federal student aid money is riddled with flaws, Southern Baptist financial aid officers have contended.

Secretary of Education William J. Bennett recently announced new administrative sanctions will be levied against educational institutions where loan defaults by students and former students in the federal Guaranteed Student Loan Program exceed 20 percent.

Bennett released a list of the fiscal year 1985 purported rates for 7,295 postsecondary institutions participating in the loan program. The rate is calculated on the percentage of borrowers who entered repayment status in fiscal year 1985 and who defaulted before the end of fiscal year 1986.

The list indicated students at 32 percent of the institutions had default rates of 20 percent or more. Bennett noted a letter has been sent to all participating schools stating the department will monitor the student default rates in fiscal years 1988 and 1989.

At the end of 1989 warnings will be

issued to all schools where students have default rates higher than 20 percent. The Department of Education will begin proceedings that could terminate eligibility for the loan program and other federal aid programs at schools that fail to bring their students default rate under 20 percent within another year.

Students at the majority of Southern Baptist colleges and schools fall well below the 20 percent default level and many have default rates of five percent or below, according to the report released by Bennett.

The report claimed, however, students from six Southern Baptist colleges and schools exceed the 20 percent default rate: California Baptist College, Riverside, 20.3; Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark., 45.2; Grand Canyon College, Phoenix, Ariz., 27.3; Chowan College, Murfreesboro, N.C., 20.3; Baptist College at Charleston (S.C.), 27.7; and American Baptist Theological Seminary, Nashville, Tenn., 28.6.

Although the percentages reported are high, a relatively low number of students have defaulted. At Southern Baptist College, with a reported student default rate of 45.2 percent, only

14 students were in default.

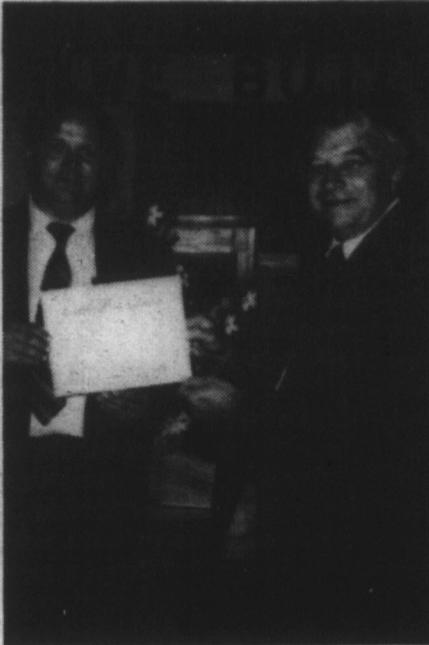
Baptist College at Charleston and Grand Canyon College, both with default rates of about 27 percent, each had 59 students in default.

Financial aid officers from these institutions, however, said the student default rates released by Bennett are based on "incomplete" data.

Mike Smith, director of financial aid at Southern Baptist College, said the state guarantee agency for student loans in Arkansas shows the school's students with a default rate of about 20 percent, almost 25 percent lower than the figures released by Bennett. Another loan agency in the state lists them with a default rate of five percent.

The inconsistency of information is one of the biggest drawbacks to the proposed program, said John Medley, director of financial aid at Grand Canyon College. "We have conflicting reports on our default rate," he observed, noting one guarantee agency had a report from the Department of Education depicting Grand Canyon with a student default rate of about 14 percent.

Wilkey writes for the Education Commission.



## Preacher licensed

Harold L. Jacobs, left, was licensed to the gospel ministry, Oct. 18, by Lizana Church (Gulf Coast Association) Gerald H. Walker, right, pastor.

## Choirs: apply for Glasgow

Applications by Baptist youth choirs from North America are still being accepted for participation in the Baptist World Youth Conference to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, July 27-31, 1988. Anyone interested is requested to contact Leroy Yarbrough, New Orleans Seminary, 3939 Gentilly Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70126.

## Swedish gov't relieves church of secular duties

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN — After considerable debate, the Swedish Parliament has taken steps which will relieve the Lutheran State-Church of secular duties it has carried out for several centuries. When the new law goes into effect in 1991, no longer will the Church serve the Swedish state as its registry.

The present law requires that every newborn baby in Sweden, whether Lutheran or not, must be registered in the Church. Persons emigrating to Sweden from other countries are likewise registered by the state-church. Birth certificates must be requested through the local Lutheran pastor, who is personally responsible for these records.

According to some Lutheran Christians in Sweden, this involvement with the state has led to strong church-state relationships. The recent action by Parliament is thus viewed as a step toward the separation of church and state.

Church-member Christians pay out of their pockets 7,000 times as much for secular research (including on the arms race) as they pay for specifically Christian research to advance the kingdom of God.

Of the 700 translations of the Bible, 400 are in English.

Abortion is legal in countries where 75 percent of the world's population lives, although most Christians consider it murder.

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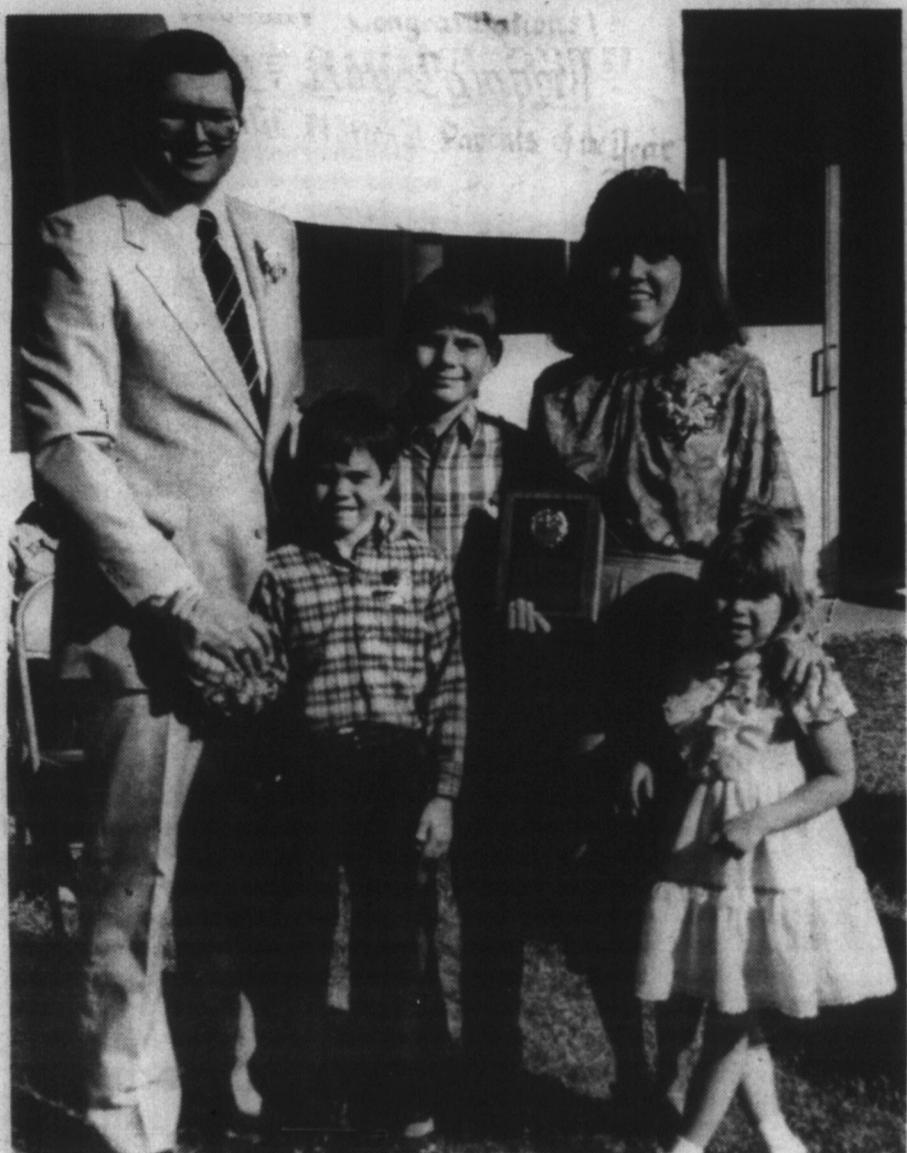
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## "Parents of the Year"

Joe and Ann Campbell, the first couple ever to receive the "Parents of the Year" award from the National Association of Gifted Children, stand with their children — David, Brian, and Melissa — during a recent ceremony in their honor at William C. C. Claiborne Elementary School in New Orleans. Campbell, from Birmingham, Ala., is pastor of Mount Olive Church in Smithdale, Miss. He is volunteer chaplain and computer chairman for the gifted program at the elementary school. She is chairman of the school's gifted parents group and phone chairman.

## Seminary Extension charts major curriculum expansion

NASHVILLE (BP) — The Southern Baptist Seminary External Education Division is developing 11 new Seminary Extension courses, to be implemented between 1988 and late 1990.

Before the curriculum expansion project is completed, it will involve more than 20 seminary professors, a division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and a private foundation.

Seminary professors will write most of the courses, although Seminary Extension courses generally are designed for college-level study. Some professors will organize the course content in study guides prepared for use by students. Others will develop educational procedures for teaching guides.

The first six courses are scheduled to be completed during 1988.

"Using seminary faculty members as writers has helped us assure the quality of our courses over the years," said SEED Executive Director Raymond Rigidon. More than 50 courses already are listed in the Seminary Extension catalog. In addition, the seminary extension department offers 18 pre-college courses. All Seminary Extension courses are designed primarily for pastors, other ministers or laypeople in ministry roles.

The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations of Jacksonville, Fla., had funded an earlier project for the division's seminary studies department. This fall foundation trustees announced a

grant for \$22,000 to help underwrite the production cost of new Seminary Extension course materials.

Several of the courses will follow a new performance-based design, which was sparked in part by the special interests of the Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division. Good experience with a Seminary Extension course that introduced clinical pastoral ministry in a hospital setting led the chaplaincy division to request an additional course on counseling in correctional institutions. The course will include clinical experience and classroom teaching. Students also will be required to do additional independent work. The chaplaincy division will absorb most of the development cost of the course.

A course in pastoral care for terminally ill people also will use the performance-based approach.

Another new course will focus on foundations in Christian ministry, which will be required of all Seminary Extension diploma students.

A missions course and a course on church and denominational polity will replace courses that were dropped from the curriculum in 1982 when their textbooks went out of print.

Three other courses — on ethics, preaching, and Baptist history and beliefs — will replace existing courses with new textbooks and study guides.

The final three courses will be Seminary Extension spin-offs of the Seminary Studies telecourses on Bible teaching, worship, and church administration.

## Foundation trustees affirm staff procedures

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Foundation trustees affirmed their staff's management of foundation assets, responded to the denomination's Peace Committee and elected officers during their annual meeting in early December.

The foundation's assets grew 20 percent during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, reported President Hollis Johnson. The gain represented a \$10.2 million increase, pushing assets to more than \$61.4 million.

Assets have increased almost \$20.1 million, or 48.5 percent, in the last two years, Johnson added, attributing the gains to "appreciation of financial assets and increased use by individual Southern Baptists and convention agencies."

Trustees also focused on the foundation's performance during the current fiscal year. The economy has been plagued by instability since "Black Monday," Oct. 19, when the stock market suffered a 508-point crash.

But Johnson reported the foundation's overall market value declined only four percent during October, a drop that compared favorably to the Dow Jones Industrial Average's 23.2 percent decline.

The foundation fared so well because only 26 percent of its assets were in stocks when the new fiscal

year began, and because bonds rallied in October, recouping some of the stock losses, he explained.

"We're long-term investors, not traders and speculators," he reiterated. "We still have confidence in the economy over the long haul, although there could be a slowdown over the next two or three quarters."

Turning to a non-financial matter, the trustees expressed gratitude for the Peace Committee's work and affirmed the doctrinal integrity of the foundation's staff.

Said the report: "In response to the exhortation of the Peace Committee in its report to the convention in June 1987, we affirm the doctrinal integrity of the foundation. We report that the professional staff of the foundation accepts without reservation the entirety of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted in 1963, and specifically that portion which states that the Bible is truth without mixture or error."

John P. Gifford Sr., a Nashville businessman and member of Immanuel Church, was re-elected trustee chairman. Other officers are Gorman J. Roberts, a Louisville, Ky., investment banker and member of Crescent Hill Church, vice chairman; and Osta Underwood, a Nashville attorney and member of Belmont Heights Church, recording secretary.

## Experts urge small churches to focus on people's gifts

By Pat Cole

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — The direction of small churches should be shaped more by the "gifts of people" than highly structured programs, an authority on small churches emphasized.

Douglas Walrath, director of the small-church leadership program at Bangor (Maine) Theological Seminary, said limited resources often make popular models of church administration impractical in small churches. Such churches should base their ministries on the gifts of the individual church members, he said.

Walrath and his wife, Sherry, the leadership program's coordinator of research, addressed a small-church conference in November at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. The three-day conference, jointly sponsored by the seminary's Dehoney Center for the Study of the Local Church and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, was designed for pastors and other leaders of Baptist churches with fewer than 300 members.

The Walraths are members of a 64-member Presbyterian church near their home in Strong, Maine.

Noting many churches have borrowed from the business world the concept of "management by objective," Walrath suggested small churches practice instead "management by discipleship." Small churches lend themselves to nurturing disciples because "discipleship is made in relationships."

"You discover the potential (of a

small congregation) with people," he said. "You don't discover it in programs. You discover it by discipling the people, praying with them and supporting them."

Some people incorrectly assume a church that is "institutionally viable" is also "spiritually viable," he said. On the other hand, "when a congregation is spiritually viable, it finds ways to become institutionally and organizationally viable."

Mrs. Walrath noted most people in small churches are happy with the relationships they find there. Yet some people continue to "think there is a problem" because small churches are unable to conduct the same variety of programs as a larger congregation.

Society's "bigger is better" mentality often causes members of small churches to feel inadequate, she said.

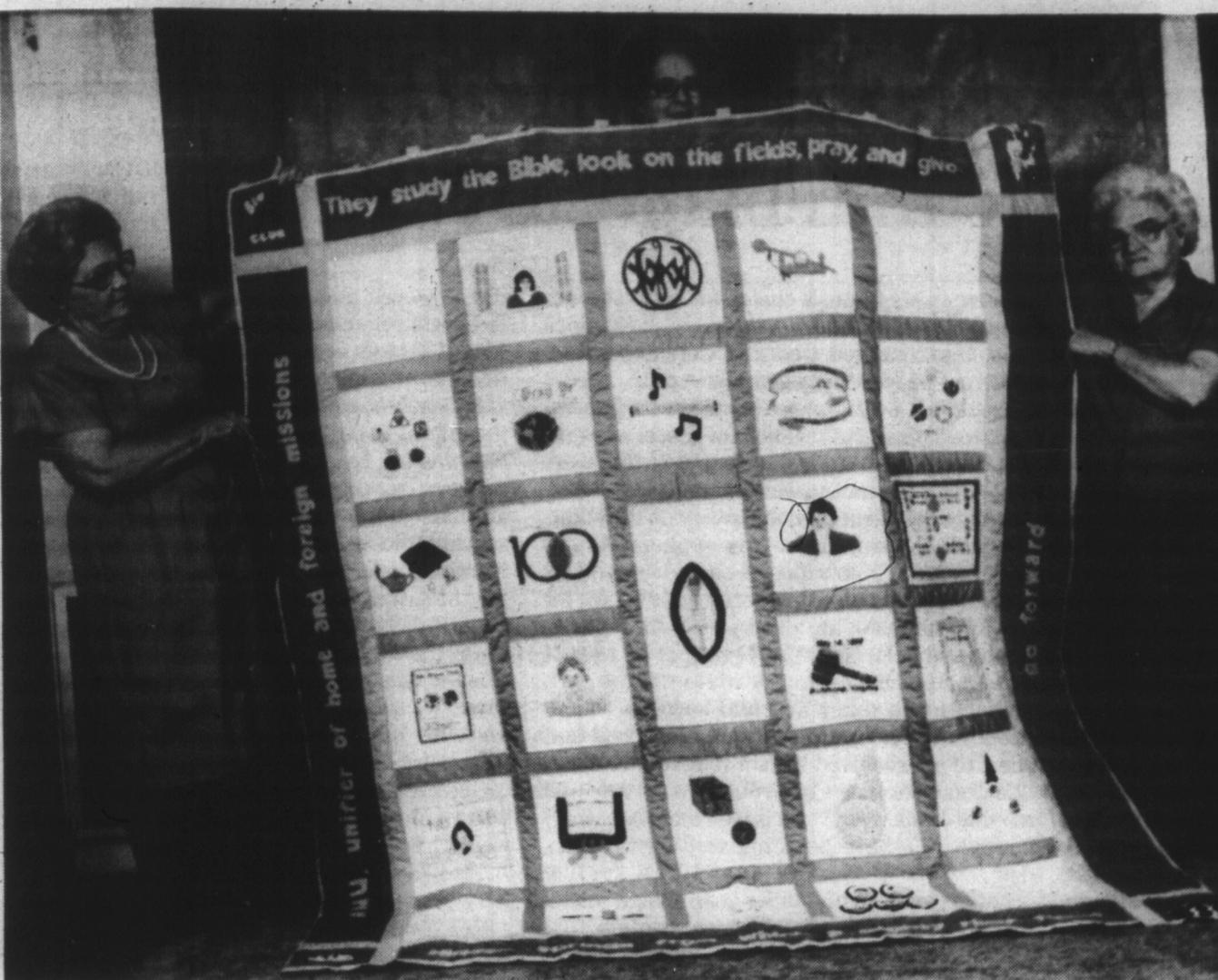
Walrath agreed. Such feelings of inadequacy, he said, surface only when "we take on the values of the secular world."

Cole writes for Southern Seminary.

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## Centennial quilt is completed by Poplar Flat Church women

The Centennial quilt completed by the Baptist Women of Poplar Flat Church, Winston Association, is one of the projects to be finished for the Centennial Celebration 1988. Sue Mitchell is the Associational Centennial Chairman.

The quilt measures approximately 6½ feet by 7½ feet, with 29 block designs depicting old and new subjects relating to WMU. The approximate cost of the quilt was \$44.

Each of the block designs is made with scraps of embroidery on off-white material. One design is hand-painted. The four blank corners of the quilt are quilted in designs of "Praying Hands;" outline of Poplar Flat Church and, in the lower right corner, the quilted words "Poplar Flat WMU, 1950-1988."

The four borders, six inches wide, are letters of light gray appliqued and embroidered on dark with the follow-

ing inscriptions: "WMU, Unifier of Home and Foreign Missions" "They study the Bible," "Look on the Fields, Pray and Give," "Go Forward," and "Hidden Springs from which a Mighty River Flows."

The following ladies did one or more blocks in the quilt: Maudine Ellis, Allie White, Bonnie Ellis, Bertha Lunceford, Carol McNeill, Betty Cockrell, Marie Arnett, Tressie Williamson, Marie Nichols, Ozelle Barnett and Gladys Merritt.

The quilting was done in the church office building by Maudine Ellis, Gladys Merritt, Bonnie Ellis, Marie Nichols, Bertha Lunceford, Mary Maude Taylor and Thelma Stacy.

The quilt will be hung in the Poplar Flat Church Centennial Corner for the year 1988. Mrs. Maudine Ellis is Centennial Chairman. Caley R. Nichols is pastor.

## High court to rule on Catholic refusal to turn over documents

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide if the U.S. Catholic Church may be forced to turn over documents related to its anti-abortion activities in legal proceedings aimed at stripping the nation's largest religious group of its tax exemption.

The church, with more than 52 million members, had asked the court's justices to review a federal district court ruling last year that held it in contempt for refusing on church-state grounds to hand over the subpoenaed documents. That court first imposed, then stayed a \$100,000-a-day fine on the church until it complies. A federal appeals panel later affirmed the lower decision on a divided vote.

In its announcement that it has agreed to review the lower rulings, the high court also accepted a friend-of-the-court brief submitted in October

by a coalition of church bodies supporting the Catholic Church's refusal to comply with the subpoena. The brief was submitted by the National Council of Churches of Christ, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Christian Legal Society, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and National Association of Evangelicals.

Behind the interest and virtual unanimity within the larger religious community is the view of church-state experts that resolution of the case will affect every religious group's ability to address public issues from a moral perspective. Were the pro-abortion groups to succeed eventually in stripping the Catholic Church's tax exemption, these experts have warned, no church in the future could address controversial issues in the political arena without risking loss

of its own tax-exempt status.

One such authority, Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas, described the potential ramifications: "It's hard to overstate the implications of this case. If the decision is allowed to stand, groups that disagree with a church's position on controversial issues will be able to attack its exempt status even though the IRS says the church is in perfect compliance with the law. Obviously, this could become a key element in a group's overall strategy on a hotly contested issue."

The church has contended it was engaging in constitutionally protected activities.

In its May 1986 ruling, the U.S. District Court for Southern New York held the church in contempt for refusing to surrender internal documents.

Haste writes for the Baptist Joint Committee.

# COMMENTARIES FOR DECEMBER 27

## Abraham provides for Isaac's marriage to the right one

By Rex Yancey

Genesis 24:2-4, 12-15a, 26-27, 61; 25:5-7

It is strange how no boy is good enough to marry our daughters and no girl is good enough to marry our sons; but if they do get married, they have the greatest grandchildren in the world! Abraham was concerned that his son marry the right woman. He was so concerned that he wanted this matter settled before he died. In the event he did die, he made his servant swear by oath that he would not select a Canaanite woman.

Abraham had lived around the Canaanites and knew of their idolatry. He knew it would be next to impossible for Isaac to keep the covenant if he had a wife who worshipped pagan gods. Therefore, he had his servant, whom he trusted with his affairs, to swear by an ancient custom that he would go to Abraham's homeland and find a wife for Isaac.



Yancey

### BIBLE BOOK

According to our text, Abraham was very old and could not postpone any longer the marriage of his son, which according to the custom of the time he had to manage. Abraham was also fearful that he might die before his servant accomplished his mission and, therefore, bound him by oath.

The servant was fearful that the woman might not make the journey with him. Abraham made it clear that Isaac was not to go back to his homeland. The servant would consider himself free from the oath in the event the woman would not return with him.

The second most important decision in life is finding the right mate, unless of course, one chooses to remain single. This is a beautiful historical narrative of a father's concern for his son to marry the right woman. Isaac was submissive to the custom of the times and had con-

fidence in his father's choice for him. The servant prayed to God for leadership in the decision, then thanked God and worshipped him after his prayer had been answered.

Would to God that more people in our generation would exercise that kind of concern toward the marriage relationship today! If this were true, we would have fewer divorces, less heartache, and less general unhappiness in the home.

When I was between my sophomore and junior year in high school, I had a tremendous burden to pray to God concerning his choice for my companion in life (heavy stuff for a junior in high school). However, I felt that he revealed to me his choice for my mate. Off the cuff, I wrote her a letter and told her in a round-about way that I loved her. Well, I found out that she had not received the same revelation as I. She wrote back and in a round-about way told me that I was crazy! "All is well that ends well," however. We have been married for 21 years now.

I didn't know in my junior year of high school that preaching would be my life's vocation. God

did, however, and made arrangements for me to have a preacher's wife. I am so glad he did. I shall always be grateful that I prayed about this matter and that God answered my prayer.

Rebekah passed the test that the servant had thought up to be sure he chose the right person. She was ready to help; she had a kindness of heart; and she had an understanding for animals (not a bad trait in those times). The servant did not expect this girl to be from Nahor's house, but she was. He didn't pray anything in his prayer that suggested she be beautiful, but she was. God always gives us more than we ask or deserve.

Isaac was pleased with Rebekah. The Bible says, "He loved her" (24:67). They had children and the covenant that God initiated with Abraham was continued with Isaac.

God has a plan for every individual life. If we will allow him, God will direct us in the way he would have us to go.

Thanks for reading these lessons! Happy New Year!

Rex Yancey is pastor, First, Quitman.

## Fishermen became Jesus' helpers in the ministry

By Julian W. Fagan III

Matthew 4:1-25

This chapter is an overview of the ministry of Jesus. Beginning with the temptation of Jesus, the chapter covers the initiation of his preaching, the call of the first disciples, and the healing ministry of Jesus to the multitudes. Written here is the fulfillment of the passage from Isaiah 61:1-2 that Jesus quoted in Nazareth at the synagogue: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed

Fagan me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk. 4:19-20).

The temptation was designed by God, and Jesus was led into the testing by the Holy Spirit (the best understanding of the word of God cannot be tempted and tempts no one, James 1:13). The forty days are a reminder of the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness, where God intended to "humble you and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands" (Dt. 8:2). Jesus already had all that Satan offered, he had



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created it; but the test was real as was the opportunity to yield to it. Jesus' ministry, however, was not to be accomplished by use of supernatural power to meet his own needs, or to gain a large following through miracles, or through compromise with the devil. Jesus' ministry was to glorify God and help people.

He therefore preached the need for repentance (v. 17) and called men to serve with him to become "fishers of men" (vv. 19, 21-22). Jesus taught the word of God, preached the kingdom of God, and healed people as part of the ministry of God. Jesus came to accomplish a single purpose, the redemption of mankind through his death on the cross. He stated that it was for this purpose that he came into the world. Repeatedly, he set his face toward Jerusalem, for there he was to die. Jesus came with this task, this goal as his purpose.

There is a tendency today to classify people in categories regarding their orientation to accomplishing things in life: some are said to be oriented toward people, some are task-oriented. Personality analysts would assign people certain job descriptions according to the category in which the person was most effective. No

doubt the classifications are helpful; but notice that while Jesus kept his task or goal ever in mind, he never forgot people along the way. He did not run over people to reach his goal. The cross and resurrection were essential goals of his ministry; forgiveness and eternal life would not have been possible without them. Yet, he never forgot people along the way to accomplishing his goal. His goal was for people, and he ministered to them along the way and in obtaining his goal.

To this same ministry was his call to the disciples, to become "fishers of men." They were to teach, preach, and heal; and through this ministry these would be God's agents for bringing eternal life. The fishermen became Jesus' helpers in ministry. His call to these fishermen is an indication that adults can share in the ministry of Christ. We are called to teach, preach, and heal. Our greatness is not the reason we are called to share in the ministry. Possibly, these four men were not that successful. Jesus was always telling them where to catch fish, and when they were not fishing they were always mending their broken nets. The picture reflects not a group of highly affluent yacht owners. They were plain people, uneducated in the finer things of life, but they were available to the call of Christ to reach out

to others with the kingdom of God.

"Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him" (v. 22). He called them to minister, and they responded. The effectiveness and power of the disciples was not in their ability but in their willingness. Their greatness was in their availability to Jesus to be his ministers. They only followed, Jesus made them into the fishers of men. Paul makes it even more clear in Eph. 4:11-12. The ministry is to be done by the saints. Leaders are to be equippers of the Christians to enable them to be trained to be the ministers for Christ in the world. As the disciples were trained, so Sunday School members are to be trained. We have the opportunity to be involved in the ministry of Christ. He has left the work of the kingdom in our hands.

Jesus provided us with the model to follow: teaching the word of God, proclaiming the truth of God, and touching the lives of people that they might be healed. The ministry that Jesus inaugurated, he gave to the disciples and to us. We are the disciples. We have his ministry. The question is are we willing to follow him and be his fishermen. The joy is that he has chosen us to be a part of the magnificent work in his kingdom.

Julian Fagan is pastor, First, Pontotoc.

## Life in Christ: "God working in us"

Al Finch

Philippians 2:1-4, 12-18

Our relationship to God is revealed in our relationship to our fellowman. On this the last of 1987, we could well reflect on our conduct toward others and determine changes we may need to make to have the proper Christian witness. The passage considered will assist us.



Finch

### LIFE AND WORK

mind. The oneness desired is the real expression of the believer's life. One may measure his experience with God by this standard.

Then, there is the STIMULUS for such life expression (Philippians 2:1). The believer is stimulated by the persuasive power in love, sharing the same spirit with affection and compassion. All of these qualities come "in Christ."

The full expression of that life in Christ is given in Philippians 2:3-4. The life is PEACEABLE ("nothing be through strife"). The life is GUILELESS ("nothing be through vainglory"). Yet with a "lowliness of mind"

others are given the exalted position. Finally the believer seeks not his own only but "the things of others." This gives the believers attitude and action to form the proper witness.

In three ways the believer is to adopt this life-style (Philippians 2:12-18). First, he works out his "own salvation." The statement startles all of us who believe that salvation is from God and not earned by works. The word "work" is used two times and gives a key to the passage. Notice the period in verse 12 in the King James version is not included in other translations. The removal of the period indicates the thought is not complete without verse 13. We have responsibility, but salvation is nothing more than God working in us. No man can adopt the Christian

life-style without effort and cost on his past. He soon discovers, however, that God is the real and only energy in salvation.

Again the life-style is "without murmuring and disputings." In a perverse and crooked world we "shine as lights in the world." We have an exalted position as "the sons of God" and seek to maintain that position. No light can shine where there is complaint and argument.

Finally, we "hold forth the word of life." The message of the word of life is one of "sacrifice and service." This dependence on Christ enables us to be joyful in the day of Christ. Our dread gives way to happiness. Joy comes as the "life in Christ" bears results.

Al Finch is pastor, First, Greenwood.

# COMMENTARIES FOR JANUARY 3

## Isaac: the man and his family . . .

By Gayle Alexander  
Genesis 25:19 to 26:35

The covenant to Abraham, and reconfirmed to Isaac, was that of a posterity through whom God would bless the world. Isaac was married at age 40, and had to wait 20 years before his sons were born. Isaac "entreated" the Lord on behalf of Rebekah, so his years of waiting were through fervent prayer. He prevailed before the covenant God of Abraham and God gave him two sons. Incidentally, it is not recorded that Abraham prayed for Sarah in those years she was barren.

Rebekah made an inquiry before the Lord: "... if it be so, why am I thus?" (25:22) The question is difficult, but most likely, the explanation is to be found in her fear of a possible miscarriage because of the twins "struggling in her womb," and hence, no future in her pregnancy. This "struggling in her womb" prefigured the open struggle between Esau and Jacob, and the struggle between the two



Alexander

nations they would found: Israel and Edom.

### BIBLE BOOK

The rest of the narrative concerning these twins hinges on the prophecy of verse 23. Jacob and Esau were to be heads of two nations. God's choice of Jacob, through whom the covenant would be continued, was a choice based on the spiritual choices of the two men. Jacob chose spiritual values, whereas, Esau chose worldly values. The prophecy, that the elder was to serve the younger, is an indication of God's choice that the covenant was to be continued through Jacob.

The twins were as different in their spiritual value systems as they were different in their dispositions. Esau, the hairy one, was the adventuresome hunter with a value system that was wild, worldly, and undisciplined. These narratives indicate that Esau had no regard for spiritual things. Jacob, the Surplanter, was a peaceful tent dweller. The word "quiet," used to describe Jacob, meant whole, complete, blameless, perfect, with

perhaps the most appropriate meaning as that of a mature adult. To be mature means that one does not act like a child. Esau was lacking in this trait. He could not see the future for the urgency of the present. He was childish and immature.

The focus on the exchange of the birthright is on Esau who "despised" it. This is not to excuse Jacob in his underhandedness, but Jacob could never have succeeded in getting the birthright unless Esau had despised it. The one redeeming fact about Jacob is that he wanted it. However, the blessing of Isaac still had to be obtained to guarantee the true succession of the birthright. To despise the one (birthright), amounted to renouncing the other (blessing). Esau's major sin was simply that he chose to leave God out of his life and plans.

The birthright, guaranteeing leadership in the family, included leadership in worship. Leadership in worship involved the blessings of Abraham which also included the promises of Abraham. These promises were to be fulfilled according to the moral principles of God. Therefore, the awarding of the birthright depended upon the faith of the recipient.

Isaac followed the example of Abraham when famine came to the land. He left! God stopped him at Gerah and warned him not to go on to Egypt. He settled in at Gerah and repeated the same fearful sin of his father of saying his wife was his sister. God intervened and Isaac was rightfully rebuked but spared.

The story of reopening old wells, abandoning new wells because of disputes with the Philistines, and opening other new wells, revealed Isaac to be a patient, persevering man who was willing to turn the other cheek in order to live in peace.

The covenant between Isaac and Abimelech followed the normal pattern of the day (26:26-33). However, unlike Abraham's covenant with Abimelech (the name is most likely a title), this one indicates that Isaac was Abimelech's superior.

Esau's marriages, (26:34-35), are further indication of his indifference to the religious practices of Isaac and the perpetuation of the covenant relationship. He married women who had no inclination to embrace the religious faith of Isaac and Abraham.

Gayle Alexander is pastor, First, Tupelo.

## Ten laws for

By M. Dean Register

Deut. 5:1-3; 6:6-9; Matt. 5:17-20

The Ten Commandments comprise the most succinct, powerful, and applicable set of ethics the world has ever known. These fundamental rules of relationship and responsibility stand on a moral level unequalled for their comprehensiveness and simplicity. Unfortunately some individuals understand the commandments only from a Hollywood movie in which Charlton Heston, played Moses, ascends to the mountain to



pick up a couple of clay tablets on which is written the laws of life.

The laws were indeed given by God and recorded by Moses, but for too many people the commandments continue to be a dated movie, interesting in general, but irrelevant in particular. We are living in a time of moral upheaval when right and wrong are fused into indistinguishable gray, and good and bad are lost in a fog of uncertainty.

Speaking at Duke University in Raleigh,

## living in 1988 (not ten suggestions)

### LIFE AND WORK

North Carolina, ABC newsman Ted Koppel sounded a trumpet for morality when he challenged his audience to remember that what God gave our world was not the Ten Suggestions, but the Ten Commandments. God's demands are inviolable.

Originally, the commandments were called the "Ten words." From the Hebrew Bible the Ten Words were translated into the Greek Septuagint as the "deka logous" or the more familiar "decalogue." The commandments were also called "the covenant." Deuteronomy 5:2 says, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb" and Deuteronomy 4:13 adds that this covenant was the "ten commandments." The commandments are ten disclosures of God's purpose for his people. They represent a covenant of principles ordained by God for the well-being of us all and follow a precise order.

The commandments relating to God come first and the commandments relating to each other follow. The order is not haphazard. The

quality of relationship between God and man precedes and determines the relationship between man and man. We relate best to each other when we relate personally with God.

The literary form of the ten commandments belongs to a category known as apodictic or unconditional law. These are short commands or prohibitions without specific directions for implementation, but are regarded as so fundamental that obedience is not optional. The people were not asked if they would like to live under the laws. God did not consult their opinion as to the reasonableness of the commands.

I like to think of the ten commandments as "laws for living" or "guidelines for contentment." If we try to violate the laws and ignore the guidelines, we will suffer the consequences of broken relationships, guilt, injustice, violence, infidelity, theft, and greed. The God who designed us also designed the boundary within which we function best and enjoy life abundantly. Just as God prepared his people then to live righteously in a world of unrighteousness, so he challenges us now to live by his standard in a society that champions moral relativity. We are challenged to keep his

laws "in our heart" (Deut. 6:6) and "to teach them to our children" (Deut. 6:7). We are called to practice and proclaim the instructions of our God.

Ever lingering in the corners of many minds is the thought that perhaps the ten commandments are merely ancient laws, antiquated rules that do not apply in 1988. Certainly we have much greater scientific acumen, technological finesse, and cultural enlightenment, but these qualities do not eradicate the fact that we are still accountable to God. His laws for living are timeless.

Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to abolish the law of the prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). Jesus fulfilled the law in two ways. First, by his own personal obedience to the commandments of his Father, and second by his interpretation and expression of the laws which focused on the "spirit" rather than the "letter." His sinless life fulfilled the requirements of the law and through his death and resurrection he empowers us to obey the laws, not as perfunctory duty, but as personal holiness.

M. Dean Register is pastor, First, Gulfport.

## True happiness is by-product of Christian devotion

By Jimmy G. McGee

Matthew 5:1-16

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is our text, grouping three lessons in a unit theme: "Instructions in Righteousness." A key verse in the sermon around which much interpretation pivots is 5:20 where Jesus says, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."



McGee describes the nature of God as being right, just, and holy. The believer's righteousness that exceeds is, first, the gift of God in Christ Jesus received by the relationship of faith (Philippians 3:9), and second, the inward development of a Christlike life demonstrated by faithful living in the Spirit. In contrast, the scribes' righteousness is self arrived goodness and external showmanship. True righteousness is what a Christian is like

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when the Holy Spirit is indeed working through his life.

Matthew, in the final verse (7:29), summarized the hearer's impression that Jesus "taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." By "authority," I understand the actual embodiment of truth. Jesus knew experientially what he was teaching. In contrast, the scribes taught by "passing-it-on" whether experienced or not.

Christians are to function in society as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Like light, we are to have an outward manifestation that clearly points people to God. Like a city built on a hill, we are to be — we will be — visible. The marketplace must have our Christ-like witness.

The Beatitudes are a portrait of Jesus' attitude. They are characteristic of a Christ-like believer, and they are basic to experiencing true happiness.

"Blessed" translates the Greek word MAKARIOI which is common to each state-

ment. It means "happy," "to be congratulated." The Greek word is translated into Latin as BEATUS, from which is derived the designation of these "blessed" as Beatitudes. Beatitudes can be written Be — Attitudes, suggestive of a Christian's essential inward qualities. Here Jesus declares the inward spiritual attitudes of genuine believers and the way to true happiness.

Eight of the eight Be — Attitudes has the same sentence structure. The condition of heart is congratulated and the appropriate consequence is announced. The order of the Be — Attitudes seems carefully planned, each building upon the other as though the following would not be possible without the preceding.

(1) The POOR IN SPIRIT are truthful with themselves and helpless before God and therefore open to divine favor. It's the beginning point of blessing.

(2) TO MOURN is to have godly sorrow over sin that leads to repentance personally and to concern for others.

(3) The MEEK are teachable by the word of God, submissive to the control of God and tem-

porate in all things. That's not weakness.

(4) Those HUNGRING and THIRSTING have an appetite for God's righteousness, experienced in justification and sanctification. It's the aim, not the achievement, that gets the congratulations.

(5) The MERCIFUL have a forgiving spirit. Having the legal and just right to punish another, the merciful refrain. When God's grace comes into our hearts with forgiveness, it makes us merciful.

(6) The PURE IN HEART are without defilement and hypocrisy in the inner person, cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

(7) PEACEMAKERS are the likeness of Jesus, who is our peace. Their lifestyle is reconciling to God and others.

(8) The PERSECUTED for righteousness sake have the joy of knowing others associate them with God; and they will reign with God.

Take a careful look at your attitudes, allow the Holy Spirit to nurture, and be becoming like Jesus. True happiness is the by-product of Christian devotion.

Jimmy McGee is pastor, First, Grenada.

## Faces And Places

by anne washburn mc williams

### The birthday of our King

**Christmas is love — God's love for us.** Think of that. He has loved us from the time He made us in His image. We with our sin in return have given Him grief. But even from the time of the first man's sin, God had formed a plan to send a Savior whose name would be called Wonderful.

**Christmas is joy — a time when families meet together to give each other gifts and say to each other, "I love you."** For me, this Christmas is so full of joy that I want to shout it from the housetops! This year W. D. is not in the hospital. Instead, we began family celebrations early. We began celebrating at Mama's house, December 23. And since W. D. has six sisters and a brother, we don't see all of them at Christmas usually, but maybe two or three, with their children and grandchildren. On Dec. 20, we were with his sisters, Etta and Odell, at the home of Etta's daughter, Wanda Page, in Memphis.

Wanda lives in a 60-year-old, three-story house, so I felt that I had stepped into the pages of a storybook. Between times of her work with South Central Bell and her activities connected with Memphis in May festivals, she has decorated her house with antiques she's bought at auctions and estate sales. Always, she keeps fresh flowers in more than one room. When she was a pretty blond teenager, she used to visit us sometimes in Jackson. And now she has two teen-

agers of her own, Faydra and Ashley.

Saturday night, as we stood in her living room, among the poinsettias and the flickering candles that cast a sheen on her choice collection of pottery, she said, "I love this house. I want my children to be surrounded by beauty. And I want them to be beautiful people. I tell them that life is always a struggle, but it's not the struggle that matters. It's how you deal with the struggle.

"I want them to realize that life itself is beautiful. It is just filled with opportunities — so many of them — and that they can just pick them up and go as far as they wish!"

I think it's like that with our Father. He created us and surrounded us with beauty, and He wants us to be beautiful people. He sent His Son that we might be made beautiful within.

**Christmas is giving.** It's swapping gifts at office parties and around the Christmas trees where little children are laughing. It's GA's making banks to hold their Lottie Moon Offering. It's sending a bit of yourself through a message in a Christmas card. Lucille Cannon of Bruce gave me something to think about, in this matter of giving. She's been sending Spanish Bibles to Mexico. To buy them, she stages yard sales. Others have contributed items for her sales — including her the WMU at First Church, Bruce. She wrote me in her Christmas card, "I am challenging my WMU to give lit-

tle things for greater things. I tell them to give what they think the most of, and get a big blessing." She's saying, in other words: "Don't give junk for the yard sales. Give what you most hate to part with. And the harder it is, the bigger the blessing." It made me think, "How much have I done without or parted with, so I could give more to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering?"

Lounette Templeton, missionary in Hong Kong and a writer, closed her Christmas letter: "Rather than wish you the elusive 'Merry Christmas,' I shall wish for you what I wish for myself: an awareness of the original Christmas spirit, the awareness that silences chaos and clamor and steals into the heart by way of a familiar carol, a friend's smile, a loved-one's touch, a child's wide-eyed look of innocence, a tear-drop on a wrinkled face, I wish you the spirit of Christmas, love, and hope through Jesus Christ."

**Christmas is a birthday.** In the Dec. 20 Clarion Ledger, Major William Williford, commanding officer of the Salvation Army in Jackson, told about the generosity of the community in providing gifts for the less fortunate. He added, "One man commented to me a few days ago, 'All this effort for just one day.' I had the privilege of reminding him it was the most special day in history. It was the birthday of our King."

## United States steps up war on alcoholism, alcohol abuse

By Tim Fields

**WASHINGTON (BP) — U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Otis Brown has announced new government initiatives designed to fight alcohol abuse.**

Brown outlined the government's plan during a national conference on alcohol abuse he convened in Washington.

The initiatives include the formation of a privately run citizens commission to promote public awareness and understanding about alcohol abuse and consideration of the possibility of legislation that would require warning labels on alcoholic beverages.

The government also would look at the possibility of pushing for voluntary changes in television and radio programming to dissuade youths from drinking alcoholic beverages, he said.

Alcoholism and alcohol abuse cost the United States about \$117 billion a year in medical bills and lost productivity, participants in the conference learned.

The cost to the nation is more than five times as high as the \$23 billion

congressional leaders and the Reagan administration are trying to save in the current budget talks, said Thomas R. Burke, Bowen's chief of staff.

John V. Young, director of drug and alcohol concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, commended the government's new initiatives designed to curb alcohol abuse and called on Southern Baptists to support them.

Southern Baptists should not only let their voices be heard on the three main initiatives announced by Bowen, but they should also push for an excise tax on alcoholic beverages, Young said.

"Tax revenues generated from the sale of alcoholic beverages in 1984 amounted to \$12.6 billion, while the total cost of alcohol-related problems that year was \$120.8 billion. The net result was that for every dollar of alcohol revenue generated in this nation in 1984, society was required to pay \$9.54 to cover the costs of alcohol problems," he noted.

A number of concerned groups such as the American Council on Alcohol Problems, the National Coun-

cil on Alcoholism and the Center for Science in the Public Interest have been reminding Congress the present excise tax rates for beer and wine were established in 1951. During this 36-year period the consumer price index has gone up 405 percent.

"The financially affluent lobbying campaigns of the brewers, vintners and distillers have obviously been extremely successful in influencing the nation's lawmakers. In the face of the growing federal deficit, it is high time for the books to be balanced and for alcohol taxes to pay for some of the problems that are caused by this deadly drug," he contended.

Young urged Southern Baptists to let their voices be heard on the alcohol abuse issue by contacting their congressmen and senators to speak in favor of an excise tax increase on alcoholic beverages, tough laws to prohibit alcohol advertising campaigns that target youth, equal air time for education and prevention, and warning labels on alcoholic beverages.

Tim Fields writes for the Christian Life Commission.

# Baptist Record

## A Christmas quiz

- What 8-year-old girl asked The New York Sun if there were a Santa Claus?
- What is the last line in the original version of "A Visit from St. Nicholas"?
- How many children were in the Cratchit Family in A Christmas Carol?
- What are the names of Santa's eight reindeer?
- Who recorded the original "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" record?
- What items are sold in O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi"?
- What country gave us the tradition of Christmas?
- Why did Joseph Mohr write the words for "Silent Night"?
- In what country were the first Christmas cards sent?
- In Dr. Suess's How the Grinch Stole Christmas, why is the Grinch so nasty?
- What New York City store plays a part in "Miracle on 34th Street"?
- The poinsettia is native to what area?
- What film did the song "White Christmas" come from?
- What well-known event in American history took place on Christmas Day, 1776?
- Who was the first president to bring a Christmas tree into the White House?
- What was one of the earliest ornaments used to decorate a Christmas tree?
- Who wrote the poem and song, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"?
- What American cartoonist drew the image of Santa Claus as we know him?
- Who popularized the singing of Christmas carols?

### Answers

- Virginia O'Hanlon; 2. "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night"; 3. Six — Martha, Peter, Belinda, an unnamed boy and girl, and Tim; 4. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donder, and Blitzen; 5. Gene Autry; 6. Her hair; his watch; 7. Germany; 8. The church organ was broken, and he needed a simple song which could be accompanied by guitar; 9. England; 10. His heart was too small; 11. Macy's; 12. Mexico and Central America; 13. "Holiday Inn"; 14. George Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware; 15. President Franklin Pierce in 1856; 16. Gingerbread men; 17. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; 18. Thomas Nasat in 1863; 19. St. Francis of Assisi.

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## Book Reviews

**WORKING WITH PEOPLE.**  
McCarty, Doran C., Nashville: Broadman, 1986.

This is another in the Broadman Leadership series.

The author is director of supervised learning at Golden Gate Seminary. In the preface to the book the author says "This book seeks to integrate the best of management concepts with the gospel function of a minister-leader." And "The message of this book is that if we take care of people, we will get our work done more effectively."

Some chapter titles are "God with us — A Model for Relationships," "Clues About How You Relate," "Working with a Staff," and "Working with Volunteers."

The book would be good for anyone who works with people to get a job done. — Reviewed by Greg Potts, Pastor of Providence Church, Meadville.

**OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO SUNDAY SCHOOL GROWTH;** Jones R. Wayne; Broadman, Nashville; 1987.

The author is Minister of Education at First Church, Conroe, TX. He is author of one other book for Broadman, Using Spiritual Gifts.

The book is composed of 10 chapters. Each chapter deals with a different barrier to Sunday School growth. Many books have been written on this subject. In fact, so many have been written, many begin to repeat what the others have said. In spite of the abundant material on this subject, the author does a good job of

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